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रामकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति

THE RĀMĀYAṆA TRADITION IN ASIA

Editor

V. Raghavan

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA TRADITION IN ASIA

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The sculpture reproduced on the end paper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA TRADITION IN ASIA

Cat No 17746
28/5/1

Edited by

V. RAGHAVAN

SAHITYA AKADEMI

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PREFACE

If a poem has contributed substantially to keeping a culture alive amongst vast masses of people through ages, it is certainly the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. Rāma, the hero, a likeable, pleasing god-man, later came to be looked upon as a human God, more especially with the Vedic gods receding into the background. In fact, 'Rāma' became a byword, with religious and spiritual, *mantra*-like overtones amongst the illiterate populace, even as OM was amongst those well-versed in scriptures.

The Poet's attempt at presenting the grammar of human relationships, as it emerges from the royal houses of Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā, had not a little to do with the immense popularity of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. There is a subtle magnetism also in the ultimate fate of Sītā, perhaps of women in general, as described in the last book, which, though, like the first one, not regarded now to be the work of Vālmīki, was an authentic part of the Epic when Kālidāsa wrote his *Raghuvamsha* and was indeed a very moving part of the story when Bhavabhūti selected it as the theme for his masterpiece *Uttara-rāma-charita*. The eternal war against evil, the lesson (if a poem must have a lesson) urging one 'to behave as Rāma and not as Rāvaṇa' has a universal appeal which cuts across religions and endears the work to votaries of various faiths in India as well as in the neighbouring countries, where the *Rāmāyaṇa* remains a significant part of their cultural heritage.

In recent times, outstanding scholars, both in the West as well as in the East, have conducted in-depth studies of the many problems connected with the sprawling *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition. Attempts at tracing the origin of the main incidents of the narrative in actual history, folk-tales, legend or myth have been made again and again. The interaction between and the synthesis of the Brahminical, Buddhistic and Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* traditions form another subject of study. The additions and alterations made by oral reciters, folk-theatre artistes, painters and sculptors not only in India but in the countries of the South-East Asia as well have also claimed the attention of many a scholar. The problem of the relative antiquity of the main

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events and the writing of the two epics—the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*—has been carefully looked into. The questions of the poetic diction and the use of the metres in the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been discussed. And there is a continuing interest in assessing the various poetic renderings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in modern Indian languages *vis-a-vis* the work of Vālmīki. A whole *Rāmāyaṇa* lore has grown.

The present volume of papers, presented at the International *Rāmāyaṇa* Seminar hosted by the Sahitya Akademi at New Delhi in 1975, is one more proof of how much still remains unexplored and deserves the close scrutiny of discerning scholars. It is gratifying to note that *Rāmāyaṇa* scholarship in South-East Asian countries has already made a rich contribution to the *Rāmāyaṇa* lore.

The Sahitya Akademi has recently undertaken an ambitious project of compiling a critical inventory of *Rāmāyaṇa* Studies in the world—"Inventaire raisonne des Etudes du *Rāmāyaṇa*"—which has been adopted by the Union Academique Internationale. I am sure this work, which involves collaboration of various countries, will be, when completed, a very important research tool for the *Rāmāyaṇa* students all over the world.

It is unfortunate that Dr. V. Raghavan, the renowned Indologist and *Rāmāyaṇa* Scholar, who presided over the International Seminar and edited the text of this volume passed away on *Rāmanavamī* day, 1979 and could not live to see it published.

It is hoped this volume will prove a worthy addition to *Rāmāyaṇa* studies.

NEW DELHI, Umashankar Joshi

1 August, 1980

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International Seminar on
RĀMĀYAṆA TRADITION IN ASIA

New Delhi, December, 1975

8th December 1975

Inaugural Session : 11.30 a.m.

Invocation Welcome : **Dr. R. S. Kelkar**
Secretary, Sahitya Akademi

Presidential Speech : **Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee**
President, Sahitya Akademi

A few words : **Dr. V. Raghavan**

Inauguration : **Prof. Nurul Hasan**
Minister of Education & Social Welfare, Government of India

Vote of Thanks : **Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar**
Vice-President, Sahitya Akademi

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8th December 1975

First Session : 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee

Dr. V. Raghavan —The *Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit Literature.

Dr. Harry M. Buck —The role of the Sacred Book in Religion—The *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Dr. Soewito Santoso —The old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa*, its composer and composition.

Second Session : 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. V. Raghavan

Smt. Sukumari Bhattacharji — Validity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* Values.

Fr. Camille Bulcke —*Rāmacaritamānasa* and its relevance to modern age.

Prof. H. B. Sarkar —The Migration of the *Rāmāyaṇa* Story to Indonesia and some Problems connected with the Structure and Contents of the Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Dr. U.P. Shah —*Rāmāyaṇa* Manuscripts of different Versions.

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Third Session : 10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.

Chairman—Prof. Minoru Hara

Sri V. M. Kulkarni	—Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* and their source.
Dr. Amin Sweeney	—The Malaysian *Rāmāyaṇa* in Performance.
Prof. Ismail Hussein	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Malaysia.
Mr. Juan R. Francisco	—The *Rāmāyaṇa* in the Philippines
Prof. V. Sitaramiah	—The *Rāmāyaṇa* Tradition in Kannada.
Sri N. V. Krishna Warrior	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Malayalam Literature and Folk-lore.
Dr. C. R. Sarma	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Telugu Literature and Folk-lore.

Fourth Session : 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. Asutosh Bhattacharya

Mr. Chamlong Sarapadnuke	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Thai Theatre
Smt. Kamala Ratnam	—The *Rāmāyaṇa* in Laos (Vientiane Version).
Dr. S. Sahai	—The Khvay Thuaraphi.
Prof. S.K. Chatterjee	—The *Rāmāyaṇa*—Its Character, Genesis, History, Expansion and Exodus.
Mr. U. Tien Han and Mr. U. Khin Zaw	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Burmese Literature and Arts

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10th December 1975

Fifth Session : 10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.

Chairman—Mr. Juan R. Franscisco

Sri D.C. Sircar	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Inscriptions
Prof. Minoru Hara	—Textual theme of *Rāmāyaṇa* in Japan.
Smt. Kamala Sankrityayan	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Nepali Literature
Mr. J. Tilakasiri	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Sinhalese Literature and its Folk Version.
Dr. C.E. Godakumbura	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Sri Laṅkā and Laṅkā of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Sixth Session : 2.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Chairman—Mr. J. Tilakasiri

Mr. S. Singaravelu	—Tulasīdāsa's *Rāmacharitamānasa* in Hindi and its Relationship to the Sanskrit version of Vālmīki, the Tamil version of Kamban, and the Thai version of King Rāma I.
Dr. Bhagwati Prasad Singh	—Bhusundi *Rāmāyaṇa* and its Influence on the Medieval *Rāmāyaṇa* Literature.
Dr. (Smt.) Induja Awasthi	—Rāmacharitamanas and the performing tradition of *Rāmāyaṇa*.
Smt. Baljit Tulsi	—*Rāmāvatāra* (*Rāmāyaṇa*) by Guru Gobind Singh.
Prof. Umashankar Joshi	—The *Rāmāyaṇa* and its impact on Gujarati Literature.
Prof. P.N. Pushp	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Kashmiri Literature and Folk-lore

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11th December 1975

Seventh Session: 10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.

Chairman—Fr. Camille Bulke

Prof. Bhabatosh Datta	—The *Rāmāyaṇa* in Bengal.
Prof. K. C. Sahoo	—Rāma Literature in Orissa and its Influence on Indonesia.
Sri E. Nilakanta Singh	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Manipuri Literature and Folklore.
Sri Biswanarayan Shastri	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Assamese Literature and Folklore.
Dr. Asutosh Bhattacharya	—Oral Tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Bengal.
Sri Nilamani Mishra	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Oriya Literature and Oral Tradition.
Dr. S. Shankar Raju Naidu	—Re-creations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Tamil and Hindi.

Eighth Session: 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan

Dr. C. Sivaramamurti	—The *Rāmāyaṇa* in Indian Sculpture.
Sri R. Nagaswamy	—Sri *Rāmāyaṇa* in Tamilnadu in Art, Thought and Literature.
Dr. Lokesh Chandra	—*Rāmāyaṇa*, the Epic of Asia.
Prof. T. S. Damdinsuren	—*Rāmāyaṇa* in Mongolia.

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12th December 1975

Ninth Session : 10 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. C. Sivaramamurti

Suresh Awasthi —The *Rāmāyaṇa* Tradition and the Performing Arts.

Dr. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul —*Rāmāyaṇa* in Sculpture and Paintings in Thailand.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan —*Rāmāyaṇa* in the Arts of Asia.

Tenth Session: 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Chairman—Dr. V. Raghavan

Discussion and Recommendations for a Report

Concluding Remarks : Dr. V. Raghavan

Vote of Thanks : Dr. R. S. Kelkar

Rapporteur for the Seminar : Dr. C. R. Sarma

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

By **Dr. V. RAGHAVAN**

To attempt to describe the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit literature would be like attempting to describe the immanense of God in creation. Indian literary tradition holds Vālmīki as the first poet, *Ādi Kavi* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the *Ādikāvya,* the first poem, apart from the *Vedic Rshis* and their hymns. He was the path-maker for the honeyed expressions of poetry, as Bhoja says in his *Rāmāyaṇa Campu* :

मधुमयभणितीनां मार्गदर्शी महर्षिः । I. 8

Modern historians of Sanskrit literature also express the same opinion e.g. Jacobi and Keith, who say : It (the *Rāmāyaṇa*) was the precursor of all homogeneous and artificial poems (i.e. *Kāvyas*) and 'the technique of poetry with regard to delineation, language and metre, which was brought to completion by Vālmīki, became the standard for the epic poetry of later times'. (P. 64, Jacobi, *The Rāmāyaṇa,* English Translation, Baroda). 'Vālmīki and those who improved on him in the period 400-200 BC are clearly the legitimate ancestors of the court epic.' 'as they (the later poets) drew deeply upon it for their themes, so they found in it the models for the ornaments of their style'. ' Imitation in detail of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is frequent and patent and its language and verse technique deeply affected the whole of the history of the *Kāvya*'. (Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* pp. 43, 45). From the *Rāmāyaṇa* were born the ideas, concepts and devices of the art of the poets,

इतिहासोत्तमादस्माज्जायन्ते कविबुद्धयः । I, 2. 385

as Vyāsa said of his own epic.

Vyāsa is included among those, indeed at the head of those, whose poetic minds were fed and formed by Vālmīki. In his usual interesting manner, Rājaśekhara, the poet-critic (of the end of the 9th and beginning the 10th Century A.D.), presents in the prelude to the opening act of his unfinished play on the

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Mahābhārata-theme, called the *Bālabhārata,* the sage-poets of the two epics in dialogue and makes Vyāsa address Vālmīki as master, *Upādhyāya* and the first poet, *Prathama-kavi* and take his blessings.

Another indigenous treatment, a more elaborate and more literary and interesting treatment, of the primary place of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is to be found in the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* which was probably composed in the 13th or 14th Century A.D. The *Rāmāyaṇa,* which occupies a considerable portion of this *Purāṇa* text, is referred to here as *Mahākāvya* and Vālmīki is described as the first manifestation of *Vāk.* The *Rāmāyaṇa* is described as the source and model of all *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* literature. Pleased with Vālmīki's production of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Brahma asks Vālmīki to take up composing the *Mahābhārata* but Vālmīki replies : "I have composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* and am free from doubt, agitation and illusion; wherefore shall I vainly take up another work ?"

कृतं रामायणं ब्रह्मन् व्यक्तं मोक्षस्य साधनम् ।
निःसन्देहो ह्यहं भूतः क्षोभमोहविवर्जितः ॥ 27-6-7

But adds "when Vyāsa comes, I shall impart to him the eternal seeds of poetry, *Kāvyabījam sanātanam* (Sl. 11). Vyāsa and other sages come and Vālmīki gives them the seed matrix of poetry for composing the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* and says in conclusion "In the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas,* wherever Rāma's story comes, there my spirit will animate you all."[1]

तेषु तेषु पुराणेषु महाभारत एव च ।
यत्र रामचरित्रं स्यात् तदहं तत्र शक्तिमान् ॥ 30-51

Along with the above traditional and literary treatment of the primary position of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its relation particularly to the *Mahābhārata,* we may consider also from the critical and historical viewpoint the mutual relation of the two epics. In addition to several references to the characters and episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and situations parallel to those in the

1 See pp. 71-3, my *Greater Rāmāyaṇa*

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Rāmāyaṇa, the *Mahābhārata* has, towards the end of its third book (*Vana*), a sub-section called the *Rāmopākhyāna;* and in addition to this long narrative of the whole story of Rāma in about 20 chapters, the *Mahābhārata* has also several short resumes of the story of Rāma in different contexts. There is also a precious quotation of three lines from Vālmīki, cited as authority, one line of which is missing from the Southern and Eastern recensions of the *Rāmāyaṇa.* Now the *Rāmopākhyāna* in the *Mahābhārata,* which shows some differences from the text of Vālmīki, yet discloses the influence of the latter and has several passages showing its minute acquaintance with Vālmīki's text. Jacobi, Winternitz and Sukthankar, the first editor of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata,* discussed this question of the relation of the *Rāmopākhyāna* in the *Mahābhārata* with *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and concluded that the *Rāmopākhyāna* knew Vālmīki and represented a free summary of Vālmīki's text. In my study of this question in my *Greater Rāmāyaṇa,*[2] I adduced further evidences in support of the above conclusion and I am glad that the last editor of the now concluded critical edition of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* from Baroda, Dr. U. P. Shah, has supported the above view. (Pp. 29-30, Vol. 7, Introduction at the end of the last part of the *Uttara Kāṇḍa*). It is also important to note that the *Rāmopākhyāna* already knows the full text of Vālmīki as it is current with the *Bāla* and *Uttara Kāṇḍas* and knows also the longer verses; it is also noteworthy that its narrative opens with the story of Rāvaṇa, a feature found generally in the South-East Asian versions.

It is usually pointed out that the *Pāṇini Sūtras,* which refer to the characters of the *Mahābhārata.,* have no references to the *Rāmāyaṇa.* A negative evidence like this is not of absolute value. In his introductory verses on the earlier poets in his *Harṣacarita,* poet Bāṇa praises Vyāsa, and after him several classical poets, but does not mention Vālmīki. However in the body of his works, especially the *Kādambarī,* there are numerous references to the story and characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa.* Pātañjali (mid. 2nd Cent. B.C.) knows the *Rāmāyaṇa:* in his *Mahābhāṣya,* on Pāṇini 1.1.57, he mentions *Ravani;* and on 6.1.57, *Kiṣkindhā Guha; Kiṣkindhā* occurs also in the *Gānapāṭha.* More interesting than these is Pātañjali's

2 See pp. 2-31, *The Greater Rāmāyaṇa.*

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citation of two *Anuṣṭubh* verses making a humorous reference to a solitary monkey in the monkey army standing up and worshipping the Sun, which attests the popularity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and works or writings based on its story.

बहूनामप्यचित्तानामेको भवति चित्तवान् ।
पश्य वानरसैन्येऽस्मित् यदर्कमुपतिष्ठते ॥
मैवं मंस्थाः सचित्तोऽयमेषोऽपि हि यथा वयम् ।
एतदप्यस्य कापेयं यदर्कमुपतिष्ठति ॥ I, 3. 25

Under III. 1.67 (5), Pātañjali quotes the bit 'एति जीवन्तमानन्दः' which is in all likelihood Vālmīki V.34.6, words uttered by Sītā.

The two epics had also become part of the discipline and education of young princes. Kauṭilya warns them in the section on control of senses (I.6.8) not to follow the example of Rāvaṇa and Duryodhana and go to ruin.

मानाद् रावणः परदारानप्रयच्छन् दुर्योधनो राज्यांशं च ।

Early Buddhistic literature, Pāli and Sanskrit, knows the *Rāmāyaṇa*-story very well which it uses with orientation to its own purpose. There are several *Jātakas* which thus use the main story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as its episodes. Some *Gāthās* and gnomic verses of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are also found in them. It is natural that a text popular among the orthodox should be used by the reformist sects, with modifications, to suit their own doctrines. This trend is best seen in the *Mahāyāna* works and Buddhalogical writings imbued with *Buddha-bhakti*. The personality of the Buddha was conceived like that of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa and his description as a *Mahāpuruṣa* with all his *lakṣaṇas* or his physical training and feats and tests of strength as a *Kṣatriya* prince, the description of the palace, the harem, etc., all these that we have in the works in Hybrid Sanskrit, the *Lalitavistāra, Mahāvātsu, Saddharmapuṇḍarīka,* etc., have not merely echoes but actual verbal parallels with the descriptions of Rāma, his personality, his qualities of head and heart and the descriptions of palace and harem in Laṅkā in the *Rāmāyaṇa.* The better known and more conspicuous parallels in ideas and expressions are in the two poems in classical Sanskrit by Aśvaghoṣa, the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda.* To the

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examples already shown and discussed by earlier scholars, I have added several telling ones in my paper on 'Buddhalogical Texts and the Epics.'[3] The *Mahāvibhāṣa* on the *Jñānaprasthāna* of Kātyāyanīputra written under Kaniṣka, speaks of the central theme of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and gives its extent as 12,000 ślokas. That the *Rāmāyaṇa* was recited in public, as it still continues to be recited and expounded, is mentioned in Kumaralata's *Kalpanamanditaka* (end of 2nd century A.D.). Like Aśvaghoṣa earlier, Vasubandhu, later, was a great lover of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* according to *Paramārtha*'s account of his life available in Chinese.[4] If the *Rāmāyaṇa* continues to enjoy its vogue among the people of South-East Asia who follow the religion of the Buddha, there has already been a long historical background for the *Rāmāyaṇa* as part and parcel of the Buddhist writings and for Rāma as a *Bodhisattva.*

Jainism also used the *Rāmāyaṇa,* but with drastic changes in the story, incidents and characters. Starting with the *Paumacaria* of Vimalasuri (3rd or 4th Century A.D.), several works give us accounts of the Jain version of the Rāma story.

We may now come to the main stream of Sanskrit literature from where we left, the *Mahābhārata.* We referred to the observation in the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* that wherever in the *Itihāsa-purāṇa* literature, there is the Rāma-story, there the spirit of Vālmīki is active. The *Harivamśa,* a supplement (*Khila*) to the *Mahābhārata* imitates Vālmīki, has many evidences of his influence and above all, describes dramatic presentations of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; it mentions the dramatisation of two espisodes especially, that of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and that of Rambhā, Nalakūbara and Rāvaṇa. Earlier the episode of Śatrughna going against Lavaṇāsura and killing him is also described. These show that the *Harivamśa* knew the text of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with the *Bāla* and *Uttara kāṇḍas.*[5]

In the vast *Purāṇa* literature there is hardly a *Purāṇa* or *Upa-purāṇa* that has not got a long or short narrative of the *Rāmāyaṇa.* I do not want to take your time by entering into the

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3 *Adyar Library Bulletin* XX. 1956, Buddha Jayanti Number pp. 349-359.
4 Watanabe, JRAS. 1907, pp. 97 ff.
5 See my *Greater Rāmāyaṇa*, pp. 31-3.

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mass of this *Rāmāyaṇa-Rāma* material in the Purāṇic literature; I refer you to my study of all this in my book entitled 'The Greater Rāmāyaṇa.'[6] The study shows the permeation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the Purāṇic literature, direct borrowings from Vālmīki, resumes of the story based on him, elaborations of the story, particularly of the later life of Rāma as King, and developments of the story in the wake and under the impact of the cults of Rāma, Śiva and Devī-Śakti. All through, the aim of this literature is to keep before the people the elevating personality of Rāma as the embodiment of *Dharma* and his exemplary reign of righteousness, the *Dharmarājya* or *Rāmarājya.*

We started with Vālmīki as the *Ādikavi* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the *Ādikāvya.* The most important study then is of the influence and inspiration provided by Vālmīki for the classical poets and the influence of his work on classical Sanskrit literature, the poems and the plays, *Kāvyas* and *Nāṭakas.* The ideal of the Sanskrit heroic poem and play, the *Mahākāvya* and *Nāṭaka,* is to present in the hero of the work a sublime personality of exalted character and ennobling qualities, such as Rāma was as depicted by Vālmīki. Two poets, both playwrights, the earlier Murārī and the later Jayadeva, in the prologues of their plays on Rāma, the *Anargha-rāghava* and the *Prasanna-rāghava,* asked the question : 'Wherefore this taking up of Rāma as the theme again and again?' And answered with the counter-question : 'Where else could poets get a hero endowed with such qualities and how else could their literary gifts fulfil themselves than by dwelling on such a character?'

यदि क्षुण्णं पूर्वैरिति जहति रामस्य चरितं
गुणैरेतावद्भिः जगति पुनरन्यो जयति कः ।
स्वमात्मानं तत्तद्गुणगरिमगम्भीरमधुर-
स्फुरद्वाग्ब्रह्माणः कथमुपकरिष्यन्ति कवयः ॥ AR. I. 9

स्वसूक्तीनां पात्रं रघुतिलकमेकं कलयतां
कवीनां को दोषः स तु गुणगणानामवगुणः ।

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[6] PP. 33 to end.

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यदेतैर्निःशेषैरपरगुणलुब्धैरिव जग-
त्यसावेकश्चक्रे सततसुखसंवासवसतिः ॥ PR, I, 12

Similar tributes paid by poets to Vālmīki have all been collected and presented by me in a booklet 'Ādikavi-Kāvya-prasastayaḥ.'[7]

Apart from tne central factor of the character of the hero and its delineation supplied by the *Rāmāyaṇa,* other features that go into the structure of the *Mahākāvya,* the descriptions of other characters like the heroine and other women, the anti-hero, of love and all its attendent feelings in union and separation, the city and the country, nature with its hills, forests and rivers, the seasons, trees and flowers, the rise and setting of sun and moon, night and dawn, of polity and war, of life among the high and the low, etc.— in all these Vālmīki gave the model, standard and inspiration. It is not only the Rāma-Kāvya but all Kāvya derives the material and method from the *Rāmāyaṇa.*

The model and influence include the use of metre and even the practice of varying the metre at the end of a canto.

Reference has already been made to Aśvaghoṣa's admiration for Vālmīki and his poem, and his borrowings from it. But the greatest poet of the classical age, Kālidāsa, is the greatest admirer and follower of Vālmīki. A later poet, Utprekshavallabha, says in his poem, the *Bhikṣāṭana-kāvya* (I.5), that "two poets stand supreme, Vālmīki the first of poets and that Kālidāsa who treads his path with ease and grace; let other poets flourish or not, I have not taken any effort to dip into them."

वाल्मीकिरस्तु विजयी स कविः पुराणः
तस्यानुसारसरलः स च कालिदासः ।
अन्ये भवन्तु कवयो जयिनोऽथ मा वा
येषां कृतः कृतिषु नैव मयावगाहः ॥

Kālidāsa's longest poem, the *Raghuvamśa,* deals with the royal line in which Rāma appeared, the line of Raghu. Kālidāsa called his poem after Raghu, because after Rāma, the most

7 Madras 1963.

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frequent name used for him by Vālmīki is Rāghava. The names of the two poems of Kālidāsa, *Raghuvamśa* and *Kumārasambhava,* are found in Vālmīki (I.3.9.; 37.31). The *Raghuvamśa* includes an account of the *Rāmāyaṇa*-story in seven cantos (IX-XV). With his *Raghuvamśa,* Kālidāsa became, next to Vālmīki, the leading *Rāmāyaṇa*-poet. The *Raghuvamśa* is one of the three Sanskrit sources of the *Tamil Rāmāyaṇa* which Kambar mentions.[8] His *Meghasandeśa* is a creation inspired by Hanumān going along the skies as a messenger from Rāma to Sītā. More specifically, the theme of the Meghasandeśa, of the Yakṣa neglecting his duty, because of his being engrossed in love for his beloved and being cursed by Kubera, is taken from the previous story of Virādha, who was formerly Tumburu the Gandharva engrossed in love for Rambhā and Kubera's curse on him described by Vālmīki in III.4.16-18. His Śakuntalā, repudiated by the King and living in the hermitage of sage Mārīca, and giving birth to her son there is an image cast in the mould of Sītā abandoned by Rāma, taken care of by Vālmīki and giving birth to her sons there. Not only in the story of Rāma in his *Raghuvamśa,* but in all his writings, both poems and plays, Kālidāsa has laid in his lines gold and gems culled from the mine of Vālmīki—ideas, similes and expressions; I have presented these in my paper 'Vālmīki and Kālidāsa;'[9] and I have since collected many more of these examples.

Such echoes and borrowal of expressions from Vālmīki are found in all poets beginning with the author of the next important *Mahākāvya,* Bhāravi. But we should concentrate here on the poets who wrote on the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme. After *Raghuvamśa,* the next direct poem based on the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the *Rāvaṇavadha* of Bhaṭṭi who came after Bhāravi. Because Bhaṭṭi chose to illustrate Pāṇini's grammar also when narrating the story of Rāma, many have missed enjoying his poetry and noting the interesting details of the narrative as told in his poem. The *Bhaṭṭikāvya* has this further unique importance as the basis of the Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa Kākawin* which is partly a

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8 This is demonstrated by Śrī K. R. Jamadagni in his Tamil translation of the *Raghuvamśa.* Coimbatore, 1969, Introduction, pp. 37-41.

9 K. V. Rangaswami Ayyangar Volume, Madras, 1940, pp. 409-424.

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close and partly a free translation of it. For the history of Sanskrit literature, Śrī Laṅkā was part of Bhārata-varṣa; and it was in that island that Kumāradāsa produced the next important *Rāmāyaṇa Mahākāvya,* the *Jānakīharaṇa.* The next noteworthy production in this line is the *Rāmacarita* of Abhinanda, who wrote in about 900 A.D. under the Pālas of Bengal. Abhinanda was greatly devoted to Rāma and as shown by me[10], he is the same as the author of the *Laghu Yogavāśiṣṭha,* and also responsible for revising and amplifying the larger *Yogavāśiṣṭha,* which is sometimes referred to as the *Mahārāmāyaṇa.* Abhinanda's *Rāmacarita,* not much read, contains fine poetry and is noteworthy also for the story-elements not found in the original. The poem, planned in 100 cantos, is unfortunately incomplete; in the manuscripts the portion available, 36 cantos, takes us up to the fall of Kumbha and Nikumbha in the battle of Laṅkā. A greater polymath was Kshemendra of Kashmir, of the 11th Century, who in his effort to present in shorter compass four of the longest works in Sanskrit and Prākṛt, produced a *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī* in 6,400 stanzas, following the course of the story as in Vālmīki. The text is full of reproductions of the words of Vālmīki and could be used as testimonia for textual criticism. In a verse in the end, Kshemendra reflects on the course of the story, of Rāma's exile in the prime of his youth, forest life, loss of Sītā, the evil gossip about her and her abandonment and says "It is all sorrow; may it lead you to blessed *vairāgya* and *viveka.*"

सर्वं दुःखमयं तदस्तु भवतां श्लाघ्यो विवेकोदयः ।

A short account of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in 293 verses also forms part of Kshemendra's poem *Dasāvatāra-carita* on the ten incarnations of Vishnu. This account, like the *Rāmopākhyāna* in the *Mahābhārata,* starts with the story of Rāvaṇa to which it devotes one-third of its length and takes Rāma's story from Pañchavaṭī and Rāvaṇa's attempt to carry Sītā away; it gives several episodes of the *Uttara Kāṇḍa* and concludes with a verse closely modelled on the verse with which Kālidāsa concludes his Rāma story in the *Raghuvamśa,* canto XV. To the

10 'The Author of the Laghuyogavasishtha', S. K. De Memorial Volume, 1972, pp. 53-56.

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royal polymath of Dhara in Malva, Bhoja, whose literary activities comprehended every branch of learning in Sanskrit, is credited the *Rāmāyaṇa Campu*, in the mixed style of verse and prose, a work which has long formed part of the syllabus of Sanskrit study for youngsters. Bhoja's work is available only up to the end of the *Sundara-kāṇḍa* and it became later a regular exercise for many young poets to compose the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* and complete Bhoja's *Campu*.

Prākṛt poetry or play was an integral part of Sanskrit literature. Prākṛt was also used for *Rāmāyaṇa* poems; the best creation in this language is the *Setubandha* or *Rāvaṇavadha* ascribed to the Vakataka King Pravarasena (5th Century A.D.); the poem, noteworthy chiefly for its poetry, has also points of interest in the narrative. For the general impact of the *Rāmāyaṇa* on Prākṛt poetry, we may note that the collection of lyrics, in that language associated with Hala Sātavāhana, the *Gāthāsaptaśatī*, has not only references to the characters and scenes in Vālmīki but also uses the fancies and conceits of Vālmīki. One *Gāthā* may be pointed out particularly (I.35) which shows how the *Rāmāyaṇa* was playing the role of a moral mentor of the people. When the chaste wife of the elder brother finds her younger brother-in-law intent on her, she points to the *Rāmāyaṇa*-drawings on the wall and tells the whole day the story of how Lakṣmaṇa was devoted to Rāma and conducted himself.

देवरस्याशुद्धमनसः कुलवधूर्निजककुड्यलिखितानि ।
दिवसं कथयति रामानुलग्नसौमित्रिचरितानि ॥ (*Chaya*)

Incidentally, this shows also how the *Rāmāyaṇa* had already become the source of themes for the art of printing.

I am not now entering into the details in the narrative or the variations from Vālmīki in these poems; I am dealing with them in a course of lectures to be delivered shortly at the University of Poona.[11]

The *Rāmāyaṇa*-poems of the classical period must have been more in number than what we have noticed above. A great many of the works of the classical period have been lost.

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[11] These have been since delivered and are to be printed.

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Among these lost poems which are known from references and citations are some poems on the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme. In the Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary *Mahāvyutpatti* (beginning of the 9th Cent.), Title 7,629 is a work called *Sītāharaṇa* and in his *Pañcikā* on the *Tattvasamgraha* of Santarakṣita, Kamalasila mentions the *Sītāharaṇa* as a Kāvya. (GOS.XXX.ii, p. 16). Bhartrmentha, the Kashmirian poet who wrote under Matṛgupta the poem *Hayagrīvavadha,* is mentioned by Rajaśekhara in the prologue to his *Bālarāmayaṇa* as an author on the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme along with Bhavabhūti and himself. Bhoja refers in his *Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa* to a *Sītānveshaniya,* obviously a poem on the search for Sītā, a *Dilīpavamśa* and two Prākṛt poems *Rāvaṇavijaya* and *Mārīcavadha;* the latter was, according to Abhinavagupta, who also mentions it in his commentary on the *Nāṭya śāstra,* a *Rāgakāvya* intended to be sung in a single melody all through, namely the *Kakubha grāma rāga.* In the later ages, numerous *Mahākāvyas* on the *Rāmāyaṇa-story* were composed.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* figured along with the *Mahābhārata* in a class of poems called *Dvisandhāna* in which two stories were told in the same poem through the use of *Slesha* or *double entendre.* Daṇḍī, Dhanañjaya and Kavirāja were the pioneers in this class of poems but later poets out-did them by telling in the same poem three, four and five stories in all of which the *Rāmāyaṇa* figured. The large class of minor poems that arose in imitation of Kālidāsa's *Meghasandeśa* included some on Rāma's message to Sītā. In the equally large number of imitations of the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva, there are at least a score on the love-sports of Rāma and Sītā.

Later Sanskrit literature was produced in an age when the adoration of Rāma as God had developed to a high degree. This *Rāma-bhakti* gave a further fillip to the production of *Mahākāvyas* and *Khaṇḍakāvyas* with the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme. A class of poems of the later ages which is specially to be noted in this connection is the *Stotras* on different deities. Of these those on Rāma are large in number. There were poets like the Srivaishnava polymath Vedānta Desikā (of the 13th Cent.) who wrote 1,000 verses on Rāma's sandals which ruled Ayodhyā (*Pādukāsahasra*) and the resounding one in prose, the *Raghuvīragadya.* The poet, play-wright and grammarian of the

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Tanjore Court at the end of the 17th Century, Rāmabhadra Dikshita, wrote several hymns or Rāma and his bow and arrow. The Rāma poems, plays and hymns, the bulk of them still in mss., may run to few hundreds. Rāma poems, plays and hymns continue to be composed even today.

We shall now come to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit drama. We already saw from the *Harivamśa* the popularity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with the actors. The earliest Rāma-plays that we have are those of the pre-Kālidāsa dramatist Bhāsa to whom two *Rāmāyaṇa* plays are ascribed, the *Pratimā* and *Abhisheka Nāṭakas.* The appearance of Bhavabhūti in the 7th-8th Centuries threw into oblivion several excellent Rāma-plays, produced before him, including the *Rāmābhyudaya* of his own patron king Yaśovarman. No less than 13 Rāma-plays and several Acts of Rāma-plays now not available have been surveyed and reconstructed by me in my book "Some Old Lost Rāma Plays."[12] An old Rāma play which I have discovered and am bringing out is the *Udattarāghava* of Anangaharsha. Mayuraja, a Kalacuri prince. The best of these early Rāma-plays are the *Kṛtyarāvaṇa, Chalitarāma, Rāmābhyudaya* and the *Udattarāghava.* Among extant ones, those of Bhavabhūti lead: the incomplete *Mahāvīracarita* on the earlier story and the *Uttararāmacarita* on the later story. In the latter, Bhavabhūti excels in the portrayal of the sentiment of pathos, *Karuṇa Rasa.* Next in importance are the *Anargharāghava* of Murari who had the title 'Bāla Vālmīki' and the *Bālarāmāyaṇa* of Rājaśekhara. From South India appeared the *Āscharya Chūḍāmaṇi* of Śaktibhadra. Along with the *Abhishekanāṭaka* of Bhāsa, the *Āscharya Chuḍāmaṇi* is on the repertoire of the traditional Sanskrit theatre of Kerala, the *Kuḍiyaṭṭam.* King Bhimata of Kalanjara is eulogised by Rājaśekhara as author of five plays of which the one on the Rāmayāna-story, the *Svapnadaśānana,* which is also lost, was the best. Closely modelled on the *Uttararāmacarita* is the *Kundamālā* of Dhiranaga, King of Anupa. Kṣemendra, the polymath already mentioned as author of the *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī,* wrote a play on the later story of Rāma, *Kanaka-jānakī,* named after the golden image of Sītā with which, during Sītā's life in Vālmīki's hermitage, Rāma

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12 Annamalai University 1961.

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performed his Aśvamedha. Of the Rāma-plays of the later ages, the best known is the *Prasannarāghava* of the logician Jayadeva of 1200 A.D. Rāmabhadra Dikshita, already referred to as a Rāma-poet, produced a *Jānakīpariṇaya,* following the style of Bhavabhūti, Murari and Rājaśekhara. Another contemporary of his of the Tanjore Mahrata Court, Mahadeva, produced a play dealing with battle of Laṅkā and dominated by magic and wonder and called the *Adbhutadarpaṇa.* Like the Rāma-poems, the Rāma-plays of the later ages are in large number and they continue to be written even in modern times.

One of the works on the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme which has been widely discussed is the *Mahānāṭaka,* the 'super-play'! Its resurrection is ascribed to King Bhoja. Available in two recensions, it is an anthology of noteworthy verses on the various incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa* culled from well-known *Rāmāyaṇa*-plays and arranged like a play and with a few stage directions. It was obviously used as the text recited for a *Rāmāyaṇa*-pageant, may be even a shadow-play. The later short one-Act play on the embassy of Aṅgada, the *Dūtāṅgada,* by Subhaṭṭa has also figured in the discussions of the historians of Sanskrit Drama. As it calls itself a *Chāyā-nāṭaka,* it was considered that it was used for the shadow-play but the real meaning of the term seems to be that the poet derives much of his verses from other Rāma-plays even as the *Mahānāṭaka* does.

The Rāma-plays are specially noteworthy for a feature which distinguishes them from the Rāma-poems. The differences from Vālmīki or details not seen in Vālmīki that one comes across in the Rāma-poems are due to differences of the recensions or versions of the story as current among the people in different parts of the country. But in the Rāma-plays there are variations which are the conscious product of the playwrights' imagination. According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* the heroic play, *Nāṭaka,* is to take for its theme a given story, well-known in *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* literature, and a hero who is thus a well-known figure, *Prakhyāta.* But the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Matṛgupta adds that the dramatist may introduce a few innovations in the theme (*kincid-utpadya vastu ca*). Now the authors of the Rāma-*nāṭakas* who took up the *Rāmāyaṇa*-story also took advantage of the permissive statement mentioned above and from small things to bigger ones, introduced many inventive elements. The obvious

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justification for such innovations is that there were the well-known contexts in the *Rāmāyaṇa* with which one was not absolutely satisfied and consequently the poets thought of saving the concerned characters from blame, *e.g.*, Kaikeyī's boons, Daśaratha succumbing to her demands, Rāma running after a golden deer, Sītā's unbecoming words to Lakṣmaṇa and so on. Taking advantage of the enmity of Rāvaṇa and the magic of the Rākṣasas, duplicate and fake Daśarathas, fake Kaikeyīs, fake Rāmas and Lakṣmaṇas are brought in. Already Yaśovarman, author of the *Rāmābhyudaya,* voiced a mild protest against these innovations and avoided these in his own Rāma-play. But his own court-poet Bhavabhūti and following him others, did not hesitate to adopt these innovations. A second protest was lodged by the leading critic Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka* (III.11):

सन्ति सिद्धरसप्रख्या ये च रामायणादयः ।
कथाश्रया न तैर्योज्या स्वेच्छा रसविरोधिनी ॥

But even this could not halt the play of the fancy of the authors of Rāma-plays. Some of these innovations stayed in the minds of readers and spectators and when we study the variations found in versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in India and outside, especially the South-East Asia, we have to take into consideration these innovations also which the Rāma-plays had introduced.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* had not only inspired Sanskrit poems and plays but is also the source of the Sanskrit poetic theory. It is from the incident of the sage-author Vālmīki being a witness to the cruel shooting of the male partner of the Krauñca bird-couple and the measured utterance in his sorrow-filled condition, *śoka,* of what turned out to be a verse, *śloka,* that the *Rāsa* theory of Sanskrit Poetics and Dramaturgy is derived. Ānandavardhana says in his *Dhvanyāloka* (I.5):

काव्यस्यात्मा स एवार्थस्तथा चादिकवेः पुरा ।
क्रौञ्चद्वन्द्ववियोगोत्थः शोकः श्लोकत्वमागतः ॥

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is quoted often in the *Alamkāra* and *Nāṭya* treatises to illustrate different concepts of poetics or dramaturgy. It is quoted in works of other branches too, lexicography,

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grammar and above all the digests of *Dharma Śāstra*, as the *Rāmāyaṇa* has always been a book of *Dharmas* and *Āchāras*, These quotations, a collection of which has been made by me, form external testimonia useful for textual ctiticism, as I have shown in my paper "Rāmāyaṇa Citations and Textual Criticism."[13] The Rāmāyaṇa as a book of *Dharmas* and *Āchāras* receives special attention in a special kind of commentary called *Dharmakūṭa* written on it in the Tanjore court.[14]

A study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit literature would include the commentaries written upon it. The *Rāmāyaṇa* commentaries arose later than even the commentaries on the *Mahākāvyas*. Although the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been in vogue in all parts of the country, and has three well-known recensions assignable to the North-west, East and the South, commentaries have not been numerous nor have they come forth from all parts of the country. Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, Bhaṭṭa Devarāma, Kṛṣṇatīrtha, Lokanātha of Bengal, Vimalabodha, Nagoji Bhaṭṭa or his patron Rāmavarman and perhaps Maheśa Tīrtha are from different parts of North India. The rest of the commentators had all been from South India, two from Andhra and about ten from the Tamil area. The earliest of the last mentioned is Udali Varadaraja, *c.* 1200 A.D. whose identity and manuscripts of whose commentary were discovered by me.[15] Udali says that he collected *Rāmāyaṇa*-manuscripts from different parts of the country and clarified the readings in many places in the text.[16] South India had cherished the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The Pallava, Chola, and Pandya kings, as seen from their inscriptions, made endowments for the public reading and exposition of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*.[17] This institution of public recital and exposition of Vālmīki continues with increased zeal to this day.

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13 L. Renou Memorial Volume, Paris, 1968. pp. 515-604.

14 Printed by Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam and Sarasvati Mahal, Tanjore.

15 Annals of Oriental Research, University of Madras, VII.2.

16 At the III World Sanskrit Conference at Paris, June 1977, I presented a detailed analysis and study of this commentary.

17 See my 'Adult Education in Ancient India', Memoirs of the Madras Library Association, 1944, pp. 57-65 and 'Methods of Popular Religious Instruction in South India', *The Cultural Heritage of India,* Calcutta, Revised edn., Vol. V. 1956, pp. 503-4.

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There is also the practice of the daily reading, *pārāyaṇa*, of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, so that not only the professional exponents of the Epic but also large numbers of individuals know Vālmīki by heart and can repeat off-hand many of the important verses and even large chunks of the text from contexts forming the highlights of Vālmīki. The importance of the South Indian text has been noted by the authors of the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* who say : "A comparative study of N and S clearly show that S has generally preserved the text of R in an original or older form...." (P. xxiii Intro., *Bāla-kāṇḍa* Vol. I, pt. 1, Baroda, 1956), a view which I had expressed earlier in my papers.

The permeation of the influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is also borne out by references to it in the inscriptions in Sanskrit and Prākṛt The kings were always compared to Rāma, as well as to other Rājarshis; many of the kings, particularly in the South, took titles after Rāma, the exemplary ruler and successful warrior, the *Vīra Rāghava, Kodanda Rāma* and *Jaya Rāma.* This was so in South-East Asia also, where we find in the Sanskrit inscriptions of Campa and Cambodia[18], the local kings praised in terms of Rāma. The Cambodian Sanskrit inscriptions contain many references to the *Rāmāyaṇa,* its characters and episodes. As in India, so in Cambodia, the temples preserved manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas.* As early as the middle of the 5th Century, it is recorded in an inscription of King Bhavavarman that the Brahman teacher Somasarman presented to the temple the *Rāmāyaṇa,* the *Bharata* and the *Purāṇas* and arranged for their uninterrupted reading.

रामायणपुराणाभ्यां यो महाभारतं ददत् ।
अकृतान्वहमच्छेद्यां स च तद्वाचनस्थितिम् ॥

These inscriptions reflect a thorough knowledge of Vālmīki's original in South-East Asia as I have shown in my book on the *Rāmāyaṇa in Greater India.* This is to be specially noted, because the *Rāmāyaṇa* versions in the languages of these countries show many variations and the influence of popular versions of India and also local aberrations. The 7th century

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18 See my *Rāmāyaṇa in Greater India,* S. G. University, Surat, 1975, pp. 40-49.

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inscription of King Prakasadharman of Campa speaks of the setting up of a temple for Vālmīki and in this connection describes Vālmīki as the first poet from whose *Śoka* the *Śloka* praised by Brahma arose and who sang the story of Viṣṇu who incarnated as man.

यस्य शोकात्समुत्पन्नं श्लोकं ब्रह्माभिपूजति ।
विष्णोः पुंसः पुराणस्य मानुषस्यात्मरूपिणः ।।
* * *
कवेराद्यस्य महर्षेः वाल्मीकेः .... ।
पूजास्थानं पुनस्तस्य .... ।।

It is clear from all this that the text of Vālmīki was known in South-East Asia with the *Bāla* and *Uttara Kāṇḍas*. In the Tibetan version also, there is a neat-quotation from Vālmīki's text from the *Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa,* the strong words of Rāma to the indolent and foregetful Sugrīva.[19]

The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Sanskrit literature does not stop with Vālmīki's work and the poems and plays based on it. In the wake of the rise of different schools of philosophy and religion and the growth of *Bhakti* towards Rāma as God, a class of works rose bearing the name *Rāmāyaṇa* and dealing with Rāma as Godhead and oriented to the treatment of the story and the character of Rāma and Sītā to different philosophical and religious approaches. The earliest of these seems to be the voluminous *Bhuṣuṇḍi Rāmāyaṇa,* of which the first book has just been edited by Dr. Bhagavat Prasad Singh[20], to which I have contributed an Introduction in English where I have examined the special character of the text and discussed its date. The *Bhuṣuṇḍi R.* assimilates the personality of Rāma to that of Kṛṣṇa, introduces *Madhura Bhakti* and makes a '*Bhāgavata*' of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with Vraja, Gopīs, etc. The *Bhuṣuṇḍi R.* is one of the sources of Tulasīdāsa. Next comes the *Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa* of the time of Rāmānanda and is a philosophical version of Vālmīki, written on the background of the Smarta Advaita tradition synthesised with Rāma-*bhakti*,

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19 *Ibid.* pp. 13,17.
20 Visvavidvalaya Prakasan, Vārāṇasī, 1975.

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bringing Śiva also into the tradition of Rāma-*bhakti*. It is the best known of the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇas* other than Vālmīki's. The *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* is a short text in about 1,000 verses which glorifies Sītā, indentifying her with Śaktī and Durgā and narrates her exploit of killing the hundred-headed Rāvaṇa before whom Rāma could not do anything. The *Adbhuta* gives also its own story of how Sītā became a daughter of Rāvaṇa. The fourth, the long *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa,* is far more interesting in its numerous stories, particularly of Rāma as Ruler and records several of them that are current in religious discourses and performances of *Kīrtan* and *Kathā.* It notices divergent traditions on the same episode and tries to explain them. It is a late production of probably the age of Mahrata rule in South India. Manuscripts of it are rare.[21] On the *Adhyātma, Adbhuta* and *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇas*, I have delivered lectures at the Bombay University, which are being printed.

These are just four in a large corpus of texts glorifying Rāma and incidentally narrating their own versions of the Rāma story. A version still in manuscript is the *Rāmāyaṇa* of the nether world, the *Mai-Rāvaṇa-charitra* or *Ahi-Mahi-Rāvaṇa-charitra* and Hanumān killing them. This story has its own significance as it had gone to South-East Asia, and is included especially in the *Thai Rāmāyaṇa.* The *Bhuṣuṇḍi Rāmāyaṇa* mentions the following texts, and authors of works on Rāma and his story: *Rāmānukrīḍā* perhaps on the boyhood sports of Rāma on the model of those of Kṛṣṇa, the *Rāmāyaṇas* spoken by Hayagrīva, and *Samhitās* associated with Śuka, Śeṣa, Sītā, Parīkṣita, Pṛthivī, Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān and Agastya. The Editor of the *Bhuṣuṇḍi R.* adds the texts *Śiva-samhitā, Lomaśasamhitā, Śadāśivasamhitā, Satyopākhyāna, Bṛhat-kośala-khaṇḍa* and a few others. The *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* also mentions at the end *Rāmāyaṇas* associated with Nārada, Bharata, Śvetaketu, Jaṭāyus, Devī, Guhyaka, Pulasti, Viśvāmitra, Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa, as also a text called *Ātmadharma.* The list of manuscripts in the library, which once existed in Banaras, of Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī, one of those who held dialogues with Shah Jehan and Dara Shikoh, contains a list of 21 Rāmāyaṇas[22]; the new names here are *Agniveśya R., Mṛkaṇḍu R., Āgama R., Karma R.,*

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21 It is published by Gopal Narayan & Co., Bombay 2nd edn. 1926.

22 See GOS. XVII. 1921, pp. 23-4.

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Skanda R., *Aruna R.* and *Dharma R.* (probably the *Ātmadharma* mentioned in the *Ānanda R.*). Some of these are short texts, *e.g.*, the *Agniveśya* which is available and deals with the chronology of the events of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and hence is called also *Samayanirūpaṇa Rāmāyaṇa.* In manuscript, there is also a work called *Citrakūṭamāhātmya.* The *Agastyasamhitā,* which is available, and is a dialoaue between Agastya and Śutīkṣṇa, deals with Rāma-worship along with some narrative.[23]

A precious compilation which brings together the different story traditions and the esoteric meanings of incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* which should be mentioned in this connection, is the *Tattvasamgraharāmāyaṇa* which, is in manuscripts and of which I have published an account and analysis in English.[24] Its author flourished in the 18th Cent. and belonged to a group of Advaitic Sannyāsins devoted to Rāma, led by Upanishadbrahmendra alias Rāmacandrendra Sarasvatī of Kanchi who wrote a number of works relating to Rāma, poems, songs, commentaries and expository treatises. Rāmabrahmendra himself wrote another work called *Rāmāyaṇa-tattva-darpaṇa* on Rāma being the Supreme Being and on *Rāmāyaṇa* being an embodiment of the *Gāyatrī,* following Vidyāraṇya's tract on the same subject called the *Rāmāyaṇarahasya.*[25] In the North the Vaghela King Visvanathasimha of Reva of the 19th Century similarly contributed a number of works, poems, commentaries, compilations on Rāma and Rāma-*bhakti,* a commentary on *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Rāmacandrahnika, Rāma-gītatikā, Sangīta-Raghunandana,* etc. Much of this literature remains to be salvaged, worked upon and published. The *Rāmāyaṇa* literature is endless, *Rāmāyaṇam anantakam* as the *Bhuṣuṇḍi Rāmāyaṇa* says. As Tulasī said, 'There is no counting of the *Rāmakathā* in this world' *'Rāmakathā kai miti jaga nāhi.'* [I.32(3)]. The boundaries of the sway of this Rāma literature expands to the whole of Asia. Let this our Second International Conference on the *Rāmāyaṇa* be a contribution to the understanding and appreciation of this endless literature of the *Rāmāyaṇa.*

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23 See my description of it in the *Adyar Library Bulletin,* Madras, I, 3 1937), pp. 93-4.

24 Annals of Oriental Research, University of Madras, X. i (1952-3), pp. 1-55.

25 Printed at Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam.

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THE OLD JAVANESE RĀMĀYAṆA, ITS COMPOSER and COMPOSITION

By SOEWITO SANTOSO

A. The Kakawin

It cannot be denied that the Old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* has been the most popular, well-known and studied text of ancient Indonesia. It has been kept in the mind of the Indonesian people for more than ten centuries, since the rule of Śrī Maharaja Rakai Watukura Dyah Balitun Śrī Darmmodaya Mahasambu of Mataram, who reigned over Central Java and East Java, down to the present time.[1] We can see the story depicted on the walls of the Prambanan Śiva-temple, the Panataran-temple in East Java and also in numerous temples in the island of the Gods (Bali). The name of the hero Rāma, is mentioned in other literary works of all ages.[2] Since *Rāmāyaṇa* Art and Drama Festivals have been held in several cities in Asia, the story returns as it were alive with more vigour.

Amongst scholars, dedicated to the study of Old-Javanese language and literature, the Old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* has been the topic of controversial and not seldom fiery disputes which will be reflected in the course of this talk, but however heated the arguments are, these scholars agree on one indisputable fact, namely that the Old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* is a great and beautiful poem, in form as well as in contents. Hooykaas even attempts to make us see the *Rāmāyaṇa-Kakawin* as an exemplary Kakawin. Suffice to quote one of them, and I choose Poerbatjaraka, not because he is an Indonesian/Javanese, but because of his ardent admiration of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* and being a devoted scholar in the study of Old-Javanese, as follows:

> "As long as I live, I have never read a Javanese work as beautiful as the Rāmāyaṇa in regard of its language, embellishments, etc."

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1 F. H. van Naerssen, : "Twee koperen etc.", p. 441.

2 Th. P. Pigeaud, *Java etc.,* vol. I, chapter 84, 2.

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(*Sajeg kula gesang dereng nate maos serat Jawi ingkang saenipun bab basa, rerenggan lsp. kados serat Rāmāyaṇa.*)[3]

Looking more closely into the study of the Rāmāyaṇa by various students so far, I feel that they form links of a chain which are not yet joined together, so that every part of it seems to contradict the other. I will attempt to reconcile these findings as it were by connecting the links together seeking for points of agreement which are like bricks to build up a beautiful shrine.

First I would like to look at the date of the Old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa.* Kern had the impression, in spite of the occurrence of archaic grammatical peculiarities, that the *Rāmāyaṇa kakawin* is younger than the Old-Javanese *Adiparwan, Arjunawiwaha* and the *Baratayudda* of Mpu Sedah, but older than the *Sutasoma* and the *Bomakawya.*[4] He estimates the date as early as the 13th century A.D., with some non-original parts dating from later periods. Zoetmulder in his Kalangwan[5] lists the findings of Stutterheim (11th and 12th century) and Poerbatjaraka (before 930 A.D.). In fact Poerbatjaraka is very adamant in his stand, namely that the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* should date from the Balitun period of reign (820-832 Saka=898-930 A.D.).[6] Zoetmulder apparently supports Poerbatjaraka, founding his opinion on later research, and adds some points hereto, *e.g.*, that the absence of a *mangala* and words such as *lane, lenen,* the fact that the narrative is placed in an Indian setting and not a Javanese one, etc., and therefore concludes that the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* is not a product of a East Javanese author(s),[7] although Poerbatjaraka himself, bearing in mind Berg's statement that the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* might have been written in East Java,[8] has no objection at all.[9] Concerning the relation between the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawiṇ* and the reliefs of the Rāma-story in

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3 H. H. Juynboll, *Wirataparwwa,* p. 34. Poerbatjaraka, *Kapustakan dawi,* p. 4.

4 *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin,* p. vi.

5 p. 231.

6 *T.B.G.,* 72, 1932, p. 151-215.

7 *Kalangwan,* p. 231-2.

8 *Inleiding* etc., pp. 53, note 2.

9 *T.B.G.*72, 1932, p. 152.

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Prambanan, Zoetmulder concludes that though there are too many differences between them and the *kakawin*-story, yet the *kakawin* could be assumed to serve as a guide to the sculptors.

One thing that seems to escape from Zoetmulder's scrutiny is Berg's findings, then accepted by Hooykaas, that the Old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* in its present shape is a product of repeated remodelling.[10] Further, Hooykaas expounds that 'it is only natural when in the course of these years, or after the completion of the whole work, the poet himself should reshape passages or even add them, drawing on his own inventiveness or on existent material, short *kakawins*, episodes. Successors also may have done this for one reason or another.' I apologize for the lengthy quotation which I regard as very important. Vaidya, early in 1906, already observed that the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* in its present form considered as taking its form in the first century B.C., is also a product of reshaping and remodelling which gave rise to interpolations, etc.[11]

Cast against this background, we could possibly assume that the Rāma-story was already very popular at the time of Balitun's reign over Central Java and East Java. In what form, we may ask ? Referring to Zoetmulder's conclusion that the *kakawin* might serve as a guide to the sculptors of the reliefs of the Loro-jongran-temples at Prambanan, and to Stutterheim's findings, that the reliefs of the Rāma-story of the temple of Panataran should go back to the Rāma-story in its oldest form and material, which is no other than the *kakawin*, I venture to say that the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* in its oldest form and material should be already very popular throughout the kingdom of Balitun, which confirms Poerbatjaraka's theory. However, Stutterheim and others who are of the opinion that the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* in its present form might have originated from East Java in the East Javanese period, are not entirely wrong, as the material they studied might already contain

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10 *V.K.I.*, N.R. v. 65, no 1, p. 64, 68.

11 *The Riddle etc.*, pp. 1-26. See also H. Jacobi, *The Rāmāyaṇa*, pp. 47-75.

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additions originating from East Javanese writers of various periods, whilst on the other hand the *Rāmāyaṇa* proper might be already known too.[12]

One of the inscriptions of Balitun[13] which amongst others mentions the *Rāmāyaṇa* gives rise to the belief that the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* became already the source of stories performed as shadow-play (*wayan*) and dance-drama as well. The part of the inscription concerned runs as follows:

(9) ... *hinyunnakan ton-tonan/mamidu san tankil hyan/sinalu macaritta bimma kumara manigal kica* (10) *ka/sijaluk macarita ramayana/mamirus mabanol si munmuk/si galigi mawayan buat tyan macarita bimma ya kumara...* (Entertainment was requested. The representative of God (the puppeteer) sang, the story of young Bīma killing Kīcaka was going to be performed. (Then) the story of Rāma was (also) requested. Si Munmuk performed it with much merriment, whilst Si Galigi performed the shodow-play for the public with the story of Young Bīma...)

I must admit that the translation is still bristling with uncertainties, so that some explanations are required:

san tankil hyan—puppeteer. Literally it can be rendered as 'the one waiting upon God'. The puppeteer even at present is still regarded as a holy person and in mystic circles even regarded as the symbol of God Himself.

sinalu—read as *sijaluk*, rendered as' requested'.

Bimma kumara manigal Kīcaka—without doubt the story referred to here is the story from the Wirāṭaparwa in which Bīma, still a youngster, kills Kīcaka who makes advances to Dropadi.[14] This kind of story, till before the Pacific war, was very much a favourite amongst the

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12 In my book 'Lilaracana Rāmāyaṇa', I put captions in Old Javanese derived from the *kakawin* under the pictures taken from the reliefs of the Lorojongran and Panataran temples.

13 F.H. van Naerssen, *B.K.I.*, 95, 1937, p. 441-61.

14 H.H. Juynboll, Wirāṭaparwa, p. 37-41.

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Javanese, e.g., *Rajamala* from *raja malla*[15], and *Kangsa adu jago* which seems to be a mixture of this Wirāṭaparwa-story with Kresnandaka.[16]

mamirus—to perform the shadow-play.[17] It is remarkable that for the act of performing a story, two words are used: *mwayan* for the story from the Wirāṭaparwa and *mamirus* for the story of Rāma. Further clues are the facts that the Wirāṭaparwa story is performed for the *tyan*, perhaps an abbreviation of *tyan tani* (the common people); and that mamirus is followed by *mabanol* and the performer is *si munmuk* which might refer to a *rakat-dancer* (mask-dancer). Van Naerssen remarks that the word *macarita* in contrast with *miket* (to write a poem), means to write a story in prose. I think the correct meaning should be: *miket*=to write a story, *macarita*=to tell a story, regardless of the form.

If the foregoing yields some truths, then we can assume that there was already a kind of theatre in the form of a shadow-play (*wayan parwa*) and a kind of dance-drama (*wayan wong*), which might be part of a ceremony or just entertainment.[18] Also the fact that some stanzas from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bāratayudda* and other *kakawins* up to the present are still used as *suluks*, a kind of song used by the puppeteer to introduce a change of mood or sequence in the story, might confirm this belief. In this case we might surmise that in the past, the *kakawins* were used as handbooks for the puppeteer (*pakem*), in particular the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* which Hooykaas proposes to be an exemplary *kakawin*. I would propose it to be an exemplary *pakem* too. In this respect the variations in form and contents, which very often take the form of interpolations or remodelling, could be attributed to the *dalang* (puppeteer) which later on became interfused in the body of the story.[19]

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 22 [16] Kalngwan, p. 392-4.

[17] F. H. van Naerssen, p. 460.

[18] I am intrigued by the thought that in a cremation ceremony in Bali, usually stories from the *Arjunawiwāha* or *Mahābhārata* are read or recited, while a dance performance is held with a story from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. See B de Zoete, *Dance etc.*, p. 160; and J. C. Lamster, *Bali*, p. 83.

[19] J. Kats, *Het Javaansch Taneel I*, p. 49.

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In evidence for my supposition, I would like to place before you some parts of the *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin* which might be regarded as indications toward the shadow-play[20], *e.g.*:

(*a*) *Rāmāyaṇa-kakawin.* (*RK*), *I*, 62, *a.b. kateka nira lumak~ wasanti san astaseni, padahi haji ya ginwal mangala nin lumampah....*

(When the time of departure arrived, the priests gave their blessings. The Royal drum was beaten as a sign of departure.....)

Note: *mangala nin lumampan* could be rendered as *as a vanguard,* but it is a little unlikely that the royal drum which is usually only beaten occasionally, would be carried in front of a procession to see the princes off. Leonardi[21] rendered the concerned passage in the *Bhaṭṭikāvyam* as follows: 'Then the priests uttered blessings upon him not in a low voice, others beat a drum, whose roll was tumultuous and pleasant.....' Nothing can be seen as indicating a procession, yet we can clearly see the difference. If the *RK* is really deviating from the *Bhaṭṭikāvyam (BK)*, then the deviation is due to the presentation of this event on the screen. In the performance of the *wayan,* this act can be seen as the last part of the preparations for the marching out of the army, *e.g.*—

Udawa, the minister of Dwarawati, orders the soldiers to prepare themselves to escort the king. The commander of the troops reports that they are ready. Then Udawa says: "If you are ready, give the sign (of departure) by beating a gong, first=prepare, second=assemble, third=depart. Be prepared. I will report this to His Majesty. (*Yen wis pada miranti, mara nembanga tengara, sapisan dandan, pindo nglumpuk, telu bodol. Aja pada kolayadan, dadi atur ing arsane Gustimu.*[22]

(*b*) *RK II, 53.*

Na lin maharsi ri siran nrepaputra kalih, tatan wihan sira paren ta mase manembah, sampun manembah adulur sira sigra lunha, san Rāma Lakṣmaṇa maren

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20 The RK text is based on the edition of Kern edited anew by the present author.

21 G. G. Leonardi, *Bhaṭṭikāvyam,* p. 5.

22 Ki Siwoharsono, *Wahyu* etc., p. 33.

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Mitiladirajya (Thus said the priest to the two princes. Without reluctance together they moved forward to pay obeisance; afterwards they immediately set off to the excellent capital city of Mitila.)

The equivalent of this passage is not found in Leonardi's translation, again an evidence that might confirm the belief, that it is an indication of a technique of *wayan-manipulation.* In carrying out this part, the puppeteer will take both handles of the figures Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in his left hand, while his right hand manipulates all four hands of the two princes to perform the *sembah* (obeisance) by means of the four rods attached to the hands of the figures.

(c) The battle between Hanumān and the demons led by Prince Akṣa, is a very vivid description of a shadow-play act.

B. The Composer

After summing up the research of other students into the matter of authorship of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Zoetmulder with dismay admits that it ends up in total ignorance. The acceptance by various scholars of Yogīśwara, who according to the Balinese tradition (*wawatekan*), is regarded as the author, is untenable. Again Poerbatjaraka is the one vehemently opposed to it.[23]

I feel the discovery of the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* as one of the sources of the *RK* draws people away from paying more attention to Vālmīki. Also the Javanese features which are found in abundance overshadow the possibility that after all the Javanese author recognised the great sage Vālmīki as the author of the Rāma-epic, or in other words, that the *RK* is attributed to him. Again and again Zoetmulder mentions these features, but at length he says that the Javanese author did not go far enough to place the story in a Javanese setting.

Hooykaas who exhaustively compares the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* with the *RK,* and after finding out that after sarga 16 the Javanese author has gone his own way, which I would not contradict at

[23] *Kapustakan Jawi*, pp. 3-4.

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this stage, inclines to suppose that a second poet has taken over and completed the poem,[24] but admits that he fails to detect proofs or indication of a different hand.

However, if there is any truth in the foregoing considerations, that the *RK* is a product of reshaping and remodelling, we could hardly deny the possibility of more than one man contributing to the content of the *RK* in its present form.

Poerbatjaraka[25] emphatically states that the Javanese author might have used the epic of Vālmīki as a model and that the *RK* could be regarded as purified nucleus of Vālmīki's poem. Later on he sounds not very confident, and Zoetmulder just wonders whether Vālmīki's epic served as a guide to the Javanese author. In regard to the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, Narang on the other hand observes that the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* gets its inspiration from the epic of Vālmīki.[26]

If we could see truth in the supposition that the *kakawin* is a *pakem*[27], then the change in form and contents could be attributed to local flavour and personality of the *dalang* (puppeteer), and this will give us some bases to trace in another direction, namely back to Vālmīki. Concerning Vālmīki himself we do not know very much, even from the *Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa.*

Shastri[28] tells us a story about the *Ādikawi,* that once he was a robber chief in a forest in Northern India and on one occasion waylaid two ascetics for the purpose of plundering them. The ascetics converted him into a devotee of Rāmachandra. Jacobi[29] quoting the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa II*, 6, 64 ff. elaborates a little further. Vālmīki, he says, was a *dvija* by birth, first lived among the *kirātas*, then fell among the robbers and became a robber himself. He married a *Śūdra* woman and

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24 The O.J.R., an exemplary Kakawin, p. 67-8.

25 *T.B.G.*, 72, 1932, p. 169. See also *Kapustakan Jawi,* p. 3.

26 S. P. Narang, *Bhaṭṭikāvya,* p. vii.

27 E. M. Uhlenbeck, 'De Oud-Javaanse Rāmāyaṇa etc.', *B.K.I.*, 131, 1975, p. 208.

28 H. P. Shastri, *The Rāmāyaṇa* etc., Vol. 1, p. xv.

29 H. Jacobi, *The Rāmāyaṇa*, etc., p. 51-2, note no. 3.

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had many sons from this marriage. He owed his purification to the *seven Ṛṣis*. I note that the number of the ascetics does not need to contradict each other.

In the Javanese *badads* (chronicles) we have legends of *nine walis*, saints, who spread the Islam in Indonesia. One of the best known was called Sunan Kalijaga. He was a son of the regent of Tuban, became a gambler at an early stage of his life and casually robbed people to get some cash for gambling. One day he wanted to rob a moslem saint called Sunan Bonang, but Sunan Bonang who saw in him a future saint, converted him to Islam. It is indeed very remarkable that there are similarities in the legend of the *Ādikavi* in Sanskrit literature and that of the '*adiwali*' of Java. If we can believe that there is no coincidence in the similarities of both legends, then we can only think that this tradition might have existed in Java in the past, and that the Moslems have used it very cleverly. Surely we must see this in the light of the Islamization of Hindu-Javanese literary products, because that very saint, called Sunan Kalijaga, according to moslem tradition, was the inventor of the Javanese gamelan[30] and the author of the stories of the shadow-play (Mahabarata, Rāmāyaṇa a.e.) and the first puppeteer.[31]

As regards the word 'yogīśwara' in *RK*, XXVI, 50, c. it may either be the proper name of the author or, in accordance with its lexical meaning, 'king of the *yogīs*', the most prominent amongst the *yogīs*, etc. We never relate the sage Vālmīki, the *ādikavi* with *yogīśwara*. If we put them together then it might dawn to us that *yogīśwara* is synonomous with *ādikavi*, the more so as Vālmīki is a prominent and respected *ṛṣi*, whose name is mentioned in the Taittirīya Pratiśakhya and in the Vājasaneyi Samhitā.[32] To strengthen this notion, I would like to put forward other internal evidences. The word *yogīśwara* in that particular place is followed by the word *śiṣṭa*, which is, according to Juynboll,[33] only found once in the *RK*. Certainly

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30 J. Kunst, *Music in Java*, vol. 1, p. 17-8.

31 J. Knebel, 'Darmakoeseema etc.', *T.B.G.*, 39, 1897, p. 125.

32 Vaidya, p. 5.

33 *Kawi-Balinesche—Nederlandsche Glossarium etc.* does not have this word, but it can be found in Juynboll's *Oldjavaansch—Nederlandsch woordealijst*, p. 570.

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the author could replace the word *śiṣṭa,* meaning 'educated', 'learned', by more fitting words such as *pūrnna, sampat.*[34] There should be a special intention in using the word *śiṣṭa,* and I see two possibilities. The first possibility is that the *yogīśwara* is a *śiṣṭa,* that is a brahmin from Āryāwarta, who does not store up riches, who is not greedy, who does good disinterestedly, and who without any effort is conversant with a certain branch of knowledge, Āryāwarta is Northern India.[35] Every single attribute could be Vālmīki's, even the place of residence as Vaidya observes, that Vālmīki was probably an inhabitant of some place to the northwest of Ayodhyā.[36] The other possibility is that *śiṣṭa* means *proficient* (*in language*), because at the end of chapter one of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* Nārada mentions the benefits of reading the *Rāmāyaṇa.* One of them reads: 'A brahmin reading this (*Rāmāyaṇa*) becomes proficient in Speech or Language (*Vak*).[37]

Robson in his notes on the *Kawi Classics in Bali*, reports that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the most popular *kakawin* in Bali, because it is regarded as the finest from the viewpoint of beauty of language.[38] I believe there is more than that, because on many occasions, I had witnessed in the past, the reading of the *Rāmāyaṇa* forms an important part in a series of sacral rites and ceremonies. Robson himself refers to several of them, *e.g.*, tooth-filing ceremony[39] and wedding ceremony.[40] Before, I had already mentioned that in a cremation ceremony the Rāmāyaṇa dance-drama is always performed. What is the significance of all this?

At the end of stories, such as the *Jaratkāru, Gāruḍeya* etc., we usually find a statement of benefits accruing by reading them, *e.g.* longevity and wealth. At the end of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* as understood so far, only the *yogīśwaras* and *sujanas* are said to benefit from it. The *Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki however mentions many more. I quote:

> "He who reads the story of Rāma, which imports merit and purity, is freed from all sin. He who reads it with

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34 Poerbatjaraka renders *śiṣṭa* as *komt tot rust* (became serene) which is better rendered as *pūrnna* or *sampat.*

35 H. Jacobi, p. 85.

36 Shastri, *The Rāmāyaṇa* etc., vol. I, p. 9.

37 Vaidya, p. 5.

38 *B.K.I.*, 128, 1972, p. 316.

39 Robson, p. 318.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 325.

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faith and devotion is ultimately worshipped together with his sons, grandsons and servants at his death. A *brāhmin* reading this becomes proficient in language, a *kṣatriya* becomes a king, a *vaiśya* grows prosperous in trade, a *śūdra*, on reading this, will become great in his caste."[41]

Further at the end of the story, it reads:

"The hearing of the Rāmāyaṇa grants longevity and victory equal to Rāma's, he of imperishable exploits. The one who, mastering his anger, listens with faith to this epic, formerly composed by Vālmīki, overcomes all obstacles and those who hear this story set forth by Vālmīki will return from their journeys in foreign lands and rejoice the hearts of their kinsfolk. They will obtain fulfilment of all the desires they conceive in this world from Rāghava, and its recitation will bring delight to the Celestials; it pacifies the adverse forces in those houses where it is to be found, etc."[42]

Thus it is indeed appropriate if the recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* at any stage of a ceremony will bring the kind of success desired. And now we come to the crucial point in this matter. Although this statement is not found in the *RK*, yet it is practised by the people of Bali up to the present. The only explanation would be that, what is left out from the *RK*, is preserved in a tradition in whatever form, and that this fact indicates in the direction of the original author Wālmīki.

The *Uttarakāṇḍa*, which in the Sanskrit version forms an integral part of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, can also be found in the Old Javanese literature, but separated from the *RK*, and more significantly it is in prose. It is interesting, I believe, to see how it would affect my findings so far, whether it will prove to be a trump-card or a looser. The *māhātmya* of the Old Javanese *Uttarakāṇḍa*[43] runs as follows:

"*Yan hana wwan manuccaraken ikan Rāmāyaṇa mangala nin urip, byakta suka nyan hanen swarggaloka, saha lawan hanak putu nya, sayogya lawan dewata. Lawan ta*

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41 Shastri, vol. I, p. 9. 42 *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 371.

43 I use Zoetmulder's transcription, not published.

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> *waneh ikan wwan magawe hala, byakta sirnna gesen nika ri sakaren, tatapi yan uccarakna Rāmāyaṇacarita, mon sasloka tuwi yaya juga lupta sanka ri papa.*"

(One who recites the *Rāmāyaṇa* will get guidance in his life, clearly he will get happiness in heaven, together with his children and grandchildren, living always in harmony with the gods. Furthermore, one of bad conduct, who will certainly be doomed, by reciting the Rāmāyaṇa even though just a stanza of it, will surely be freed from sin.)

The translation of the corresponding part in the Sanskrit version reads as follows:

> "On hearing it (Rāmāyaṇa), he who has no son will obtain a son, he who has no fortune will become wealthy; to read but a foot of this poem will absolve him from all sin. He who commits sins daily will be wholly purified by reciting a single śloka."[44]

If we compare the last sentence of the Sanskrit version above with the last sentence in the Old Javanese version, they sound virtually the same. From the quotations above we may feel pretty sure, that this is the tradition adhered to by the Balinese people concerning the recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and seeing the close relationship between the two versions of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, we may conclude our findings so far to be confirmed.[45]

C. The Composition

By now, here and there throughout the talk, the audience would see glimpses of the plan, components, the builders and the way the *RK* has been given its form. The *RK* has a plan similar to that of a (*mahā*) *kāwya,* its author or some of its authors are competent in the Sanskrit language and prosody, so that we could safely surmise that they have also a thorough knowledge about the technique of epic-composition, including what kind of modification(s) could, and where and when, should be applied. Concerning this method I have already accounted for

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44 Shastri, vol. III, p. 637.

45 Concerning the relationship between the Sanskrit and the Old Javanese *Uttarakāṇḍa*, see further S. Supeme, The 'Dating etc.', pp. 59-67.

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in the introduction of the *Sutasoma*[46], in which I regard the stories depicted on the walls of the Borobudur as an extended *Lalitavistāra*, which has the form of a frame story. A frame-story is like a filing cabinet with drawers full of folders which in turn are full of documents. Anyone in charge with the files could add or take some folders, remove or replace them whenever there is need for it. It seems that is the way it was done with stories, like the *Pañcatantra*, *Kathāsaritsāgara*, *Hitopadeśa*, etc. and I feel that the people in charge of the *Rāmāyaṇa* filing cabinet should have done the same.

Vaidya places the date of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* in its present form around the first century B.C.[47], and if the Rāma-story was already popular at the time of Balitun reign (9th century A.D.), we could be pretty sure that this technique of epic composition was known also in Java to Javanese authors.

Commenting on the Dutch translation of the *RK*, Poerbatjaraka expresses his disappointment, because "in many cases the translation is just a literal translation, the real meaning is very often lost". (*taksih katah ingkang pretalan punapa wontenipun tembung: raosipum kerep boten kecepeng*).[48] Poerbatjaraka's comments are not intended to reduce the merit of the translators which he holds in high esteem, but to remind the Javanese people, that there is still much to do in the field of Javanese literature by the Javanese people themselves. Whatever is the case—he says—if the work is done by other people, they will never grasp the subtle nuances of feelings of the language. (*Atur kula punika ngiras nenangi panggalihipun para saderek Jawi, ngaturi priksa bilih ing bab serat Jawi taksih katah sanget ingkang kedah dipun garap: dening sinten? inggih dening tiyang Jawi piyambak. Awit yen boten tiyang Jawi piyambak inggin kados pundi-pundiya, cekakipun mesti boten saged dumugi ing raos*).[49]

He says that in Javanese so that we can be sure that he means it, and this is perhaps the reason why Hooykaas and Zoetmulder too are puzzled by the attitude of the Javanese author(s). Hooykaas says that he has gone his own way. I think 'the Javanese way', but I doubt very much whether he has

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46 S. Santose, *Satasoma etc.*, pp. 30-50.
47 *The Riddle etc.*, p. 20.
48 *Kapustakan dawi*, p. 4.
49 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

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abandoned altogether the *BK*. Narang's outline of the story in chapter I of his book and Leonardi's translation of the *BK* have supported my view that this is not the case. Zoetmulder says that he has not gone far enough as to place the story in a Javanese setting. What in fact happened is that the author still preserved the filing cabinet, but replaced the contents of the folders with other stuff that are more suitable to his purpose. In the first half, he limits himself with just replacing/modifying some of the documents in some folders, in the last half in many occasions he just keeps the folders, but fills it up with new documents. The justification of these actions is that he did it to get acceptance by the people and to make the epic more meaningful to them.

In support of these notions I would like to put forward some passages from parts which have their equivalents in the *BK*. By so doing I hope to expose the way the Javanese author has done his job, and to establish the fact whether he still uses the *BK* as guidance. I will start where Hooykaas stops his comparative work.[50] Not being a Sanskritist myself, I have to rely on second-hand sources, which in itself is not very commendable, but it may be regarded as a preliminary attempt. There are still various things to be considered in this case. I could not put forward all the material I have collected, so that I only choose those with the most apparent similarities, deviations or modifications. In regard to this last remark, I have to state that I do not know which version of the *BK* might have been used by Old Javanese author, and Leonardi[51] unfortunately does not mention whether there are different versions of the *BK* and if so, which version of the *BK* he uses as the basis of his translation. The arrangement will be the text of the *RK*, followed by my translation, and then the translation of *BK* by Leonardi (*BK. L.*).

RK sarga 22

41. *Na lin san ari Kumbakarnna manesel sakroda san Rawana, hah dik durtta nike wenan mujarakan sambek*

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[50] *V.K.I.*, vol. 16, pp. 16 and 54-61. Although Hooykaas indicates that he has undertaken the task of translating the *BK* completely, in fact his comparison of the *BK* and the *RK* ends up with canto 14 (*BK*) and sarga 19 (*RK*).

[51] G.G. Leonardi, *Bhaṭṭikāvyam, translation and notes.*

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nyu tan pangalen, kot pet kot hayu tan patanguha lawan tak pajaren rin naya, yapwan wani lakun pamuk aku kunan wukemwi yan kroda ko.

(Thus said his younger brother Kumbakarṇa rebuking him. Rāwaṇa angrily answered: "O insolent one, (you) dare to say at will without restraint. (you say): try to follow the good path, you never listen to good words and guidance. If you are brave go and rampage (the enemy) or if you are angry, attack me with all your might.)

42. *Tanguh-tanguh apa guna nya baribin n wan de nya tatan padon, rin wirapa pala nikanujarujar janjan ya jambat cucud, anhin sakti atahwinetwaken ika san sura tar bwat wuwus, ko pwananguh hah-ah-oh tuhu n wan wuk turu turun wunwaken.*

(What is the use of giving a lecture (on good conduct)? It is useless and makes people averse. What is the use of talking rubbish lengthily for a brave warrior? For him action speaks louder than words, but you talk and talk. O, really, you are a sleepy head talking in your sleep.)

BK. L. canto 15

19. The Ten-headed got angry and addressed Kumbakarna: "Do you perhaps mean to blame me? But you have given no bright proof of your prowess till now.

20. Do not set forth political aphorism! Go once and for good to the battle-field! Do not put the blame on me, because of fault committed! Say rather the most suitable measures to be taken."

Note: In spite of different words used in both translations, I feel that the mood and picture created are similar. I might venture that the Old-Javanese version is more vivid in depicting Rāvaṇa's mood, nature and cleverness in inciting Kumbakarna to fight. He insults his brother in order to stop his words of

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advice. Respect towards his elder brother, however wrong in deeds, gives Kumbakarṇa no other choice than venting his anger on the enemy.

RK sarga 24

13. *Sandehata manah hyan Indra tumaha san Rāma soren rana, yatnaweh ta sirastra Guhyawijaya Brahmastra lawan rata, tan len sarati Matalikana kinon nitye karaksan nira, mungah san Raguputra rin rata manik sasri lawan san (n) ari.*

    (God Indra was doubtful in his heart, thinking that Rāma might be defeated in battle. (Out of) concern he gave him the arrow Guhyawijaya and the arrow of Brahmā together with a chariot. Nobody else than Mātali was ordered to be the chariotteer and to guard him. The son of Ragu and his younger brother mounted on the beautiful chariot bedecked with jewels.)

BK. L. canto 17

97. Since a battle between a foot-soldier and a warrior mounted in a chariot was unequal, Mātali, upon orders of Indra, fetched a very dreadful chariot, equipped with weapons.

Note: The above is a well known scene from the battle between Rāwaṇa and Rāma, assisted by Lakṣmaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa, which does not need further explanation.

RK sarga 24

134. *Nya kunan pakonku laku dadyakena para ri san Raguttama, pajaraken aku teka pranata, kalalah sumunsuna sirar huwus jaya.*

    (This is my order, carry it out! Go to the excellent son of Ragu, tell him that I would like to come to pay respect, as I am eager to see him after his victory.)

135. *Tamatar wihan Pawanaputra r-ujar i sira san Raguttama, he nrepati sira teka hadanen, Janakatmaja sira mara manembaha.*

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(Without reluctance the son of Pavana spoke to the son of Ragu: "O, my Lord, the daughter of king Janaka wants to come to pay obeisance. Be prepared to welcome her!")

BK. L. canto 20

6. No intention of playing havoc with the servants should be in you! Do rather what is really worth doing for me. Go to the Rāgawa and tell him :

7. "O, Rāma, Maitili is eager to see you again! Let her see you in this place without delay!" And he, the Ape, promised to do that, went to the Rāgawa and said to him:

8. "O, rejoicer of the family, descended from the Kakutsta, allow the anxious queen to be taken hither."

Note: This is the scene after the cremation of Rāwaṇa and before the ordeal of Sītā by fire.

RK sarga 24

216. *Sarayu palayu pareriya,*
Sītāla wway nya suganda yakunin,
kinebur nin Ayodya kanyaka,
masibit syuh jenu kumkume susu.

(Go quickly to the place where the river Sarayū flows, its water is cool, fragrant and yellow of colour, because it has been whipped up by the girls of Ayodyā, who bathe (so that) the saffron cream on their breasts is washed away.)

BK. L. canto 22 (last canto)

13. And after seeing the lovely Sarayū, the colour of which is reddish-yellow because the women of the town wash away the saffron which they spread on their breasts, you will no doubt arrive at Ayodhyā, the Town.

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Note: This is part of the directives given by Rāma to Hanumān, when he sent him ahead to Ayodhyā.

RK sarga 26 (last sarga)

7. *Barata kuya manunsun nke turun ndah ta raryan, gaja rata ya dulur nyaneka tan tunganan kweh, padahi pada magendin neka kendan masandin, kadi padahi padenden tanda rakriyan mamaga.*

   [There comes Barata with the officials of high and low ranks to meet us. His retinue of elephants, wagons and horses are numerous, the orchestra plays music with the drummers standing in rows. It is like the orchestra of procession. Let us land here and rest (a while)!]

BK. L. canto 22

29. Barata had caused all the people to gather by the rolling by of drums and made the earth tremble on every side the stride of the elephants resembling very lofty mountains and, with his eyes swimming with tears of joy, he, together with his subjects and the women of the female apartment the Son-of-Wind and the mothers, came humbly near him.

Note: This stanza is the third prior to the *māhātmya* of the *BK* and is then followed by two other stanzas relating the reunion and coronation of Rāma. The *RK* very much eleborates on this part and gives an entirely Javanese/Balinese picture of a re-union of members of a family returning from a long and far journey. The last line gives the clue to the picture of re-union, namely *'kadi padahi padenden'* (like the orchestra of a procession. The *padenden* is the *me-de-eng-ceremony* at present in Bali, derived from the word *den* (to show).

To give a taste of the Javanese/Balinese picture of re-union I quote further,

RK sarga 26

19. *Teka ta san kula gotra kadan-kadan, mararakan mara bakti mase kabeh, paren anembah anambehi harsaja, Sayuti takwani teka haran nika.*

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[Far and close relatives came forward in a queue to pay obeisance, which added to (his) joy and elation. He (Rāma) while preventing people (from prostrating before him) asks their names]:

20. *Syapa ika syapike syapa ko karih, aku karih syanu ko weka san anu, tuhamy yuh malawas alupaku yuh, bapamu yuh magelem mapikat puyuh.*

[Who is that (person), and who is this (person) here, and who are you? I am such and such. O, you are the son/daughter of such and such. Ah, I forget about your father, it has been a long time. Aha, your father is crazy about snaring quails].

May I be allowed to end my talk at this happy point with a brief recapitulation, namely:

(*a*) The *RK* was already well known in Central Java as well as in East Java during the reign of Śrī Maharaja Raka i Watukura Dyah Balitun Sri Darmodaya Mahasambu.

(*b*) The *RK* while taking the *BK* as the source of its story is attributed to Vālmīki as its author.

(*c*) The *RK* follows the *BK* not only up to canto 17, but right down to the end.

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THE ROLE OF THE SACRED BOOK IN RELIGION– THE RĀMĀYAṆA

By **HARRY M. BUCK**

I must begin with an expression of gratitude to those who planned this symposium and to those responsible for my invitation. For a decade and a half I have been fascinated by Rāma, and although my views are those of a maverick, I have loved this epic and those whose venerated story it is.

Having been born and reared in a Methodist parsonage where my father was on annual appointment, I hardly realized that I should one day be walking the Path of Lord Rāma with diligence. "New occasions teach new duties", said James Lowell, and if time has not "made ancient good uncouth", it has at least bidden us to "keep abreast of truth." A quarter century ago I left the parsonage to pursue an advanced degree in biblical criticism, but the road took quite a different turn.

In my country there is a path called the Appalachian Trail which winds its way for about two thousand miles through forest and plain, mountain and valley, all the way from Maine to Florida. Not many hearty souls walk its full length, but it serves well those who travel it for whatever distance. So with the story of Rāma, which has served variously as an edifying tale, a hero story, an *itihāsa,* and the *ayana* ("path") of Rāma. For the spiritual pilgrim, the story of Rāma is a little like an Appalachian Trail of cosmic dimensions. Unlike the Trail, the *Rāma-ayana* is many roads at once, and we cannot all walk it in the same fashion. I am not native to the Rāma tradition, and I have had to walk in my own way. If my teachers see departure from their wise counsel, they must not consider it ingratitude; they must know that no one can jump out of his or her skin,

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and the *ayana* of Rāma has taught me that each of us must walk authentically according to our own best light.[1]

Despite the presumptuous title, the aims of this paper are really quite modest. I propose some pertinent observations on the relation between saving stories and sacred books, sketching the typical role of sacred literature in religions. In that light, I shall attempt to fashion a functional approach to the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* the *Rāmāyaṇas,* and other stories of Lord Rāma I do not think of the *Rāmāyaṇa* simply as a collection of some 24,000 ślokas nor a monumental work in Hindi and another in Tamil. *Rāmāyaṇa* to me is human experience.

Religious traditions are like waves, and as waves pass through their various mediums, individual particles remain in the same area with relation to each other, moving in circular or elliptical paths. The wave itself moves linearally, but when it encounters an obstacle or change in the ocean floor, it responds in new and complex patterns. The particles may be compared to individual phenomena, remarkably similar throughout human society. The wave can suggest a religious tradition passing across generations and cultures, radically changing its characteristics when it encounters new contexts.[2] The figure of Rāma is such a wave. It rolled across south and southeast Asia changing with each new medium but maintaining its own vital power.

Rāma, like religious matters generally, must be viewed as part of human experience, not separable from the other modules of experience. In its fullest sense, the experience of religious living encompasses a total commitment to something seen as ultimate concern, lived out with such intensity that it transforms

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[1] In 1965-66 it was our privilege to live in Madras where I worked as closely as I could with Dr. V. Raghavan, who first introduced me to Rāma and set my feet on his path. The following year I participated in the International Congress of Orientalists in Ann Arbor where I met Dr. Sukumari Bhattacharji, whose work on *The Indian Theogony* (Cambridge, 1970) has always proved helpful. This paper tends to act as a synthesizing agent for what I have previously written about Rāma, hence, a bibliography is appended.

[2] For this figure I am indebted to Christina Bowman (Harvard University), "An Approach to the Study of Religion," Unpublished paper, Wilson College, 1968.

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the life of the devotee and conditions his relationship with those about him. Thus, religion can be used to discover meaning in existence and to organize life into significant patterns, even if the average worshipper at shrine, mosque, church, or temple is no more aware of the nuances of what he is doing than a native speaker of a language cares about its syntax or grammar. "The externalia of religion—symbols, institutions, doctrines, practices—can be examined separately..... but these things are not themselves religion, which lies rather in the area of what these mean to those who are involved."[3] Thus, recalling the incident where Hanumān's chest was ripped open to display Rāma and Sītā seated on a throne in his heart, we can adapt the words of an old Christian song. "He lives. He lives..... You ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart." From this point of view, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not a sixth century or third century book. It is a contemporary book, changing its meaning with each succeding age.

There are limitations to this approach. I am not, alas!, a linguist and your languages are not native to me. I shall miss some of the nuances experienced by persons reared in this culture and I shall mispronounce Sanskrit words. Nonetheless, I shall attempt a contribution by study of the function of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the light of comparable phenomena elsewhere.

The Story and the Book

Fundamental human needs lie behind all great masterpieces of religious literature. The great scriptures never appear in a vacuum, but they rather combine various approaches with differing degrees of subtlity in order to invest temporal existence with an aspect of eternity. No book can become an object of veneration unless it both speaks to the spirit of a people and reflects that people's value. Although such a book can be appreciated throughout the world—the *Rāmāyaṇa* is often studied as great literature apart from any devotional commitment—sacred books as such remain the peculiar property of faithful communities where they can be nurtured by their

[3] W. C. Smith, who insists that in the study of religion we are studying ourselves. Cf. Mircea Eliade, et al., *The History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 35 and 55.

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accredited teachers. Typically, events believed to bear redemptive significance are transmitted through a narrative, and just as typically, the narrative itself becomes more important than the events it narrates, as the events described are endowed with cosmic significance.

The Story

Few of us approach the world simply as object; we encounter it within whatever frame of reference we live. Whatever we describe reveals as much about our own presumptions as it does about the object being described. Gods, then—whether in India, Greece, or Canaan—are neither separate entities nor concepts so much as they are projections of human searches for significance and meaning and the preservation of order. Theoretical explanations, which can satisfy the minds of a spiritual or intellectual elite, disappoint most persons who turn more readily to a narrative.

The story inevitably takes on certain archetypal aspects as it is told and retold because it becomes community property. The repetition of the story brings salvation by recalling an archetypal event in which God acted—in which he is still acting—for human benefit. In saving stories, persons see themselves and the world not just as they are but as they believe they ought to be.

In many cases there may be some factual basis for the narrative, but the mature form of the story will almost invariably be told in an archetypal mythic pattern. Hence, the episodes recounted are not merely *historisch* ("something that happened"), they constitute a *Geschichte* ("an event of enduring significance"), or to rebaptize a word that has often a particularistic connotation, a *Heilsgeschichte* ("the story of an archetypal event that brings salvation"). The narrative recalls God's redemptive acts, but it also recreates them. Such a story is more than story. It is a reality lived, a sanction for a way of life, and a pattern for conduct and for worship. In it, the power of the Word itself releases grace by its repetition.[4] It makes little difference, then, whether or not the events described would have

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4 Cf. also Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 66, also G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938).

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been visible to the eye of a physical beholder in the fashion described. Certainly, for example, no one ever saw Marduk slay Ti'amat nor was a guest in the house built for Aleyn Ba'al nor was splashed by water from Izenagi's strange bath. No one needed to have witnessed physically the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night nor Hanumān carrying the mountain.

The narrative generally proceeds in a circle, with three elements: separation, conflict, and return.[5] Reduced to its simplest elements, (1) the hero or the salvation-bearing figure leaves his comfortable role either in exile or in a determined effort to redeem his people (*cf.* the departure of the Buddha, the setting out of Francis of Assisi, the alienation of Jesus from his family, or Rāma setting off to Daṇḍaka Forest). (2) The largest part of the story is generally concerned with the defeat of the forces of evil in a series of extraordinary conflicts culminating in a decisive, victorious battle (*cf.* Marduk's slaughter of Ti'amat, the many battles of the Iliad, the exorcisms attributed to Jesus climaxed by his defeat of death, and the battles of Rāma with his decisive victory over Rāvaṇa). Following the battle, (3) there is a return to the starting point but with a new dimension, this time the establishment of a righteous kingdom (*Rāmarājya*). The developed form of the story transposes the separation and return to a heavenly sphere (Rāma, the Buddha, and Jesus came down from heaven to restore the divine order, and Rāma and Jesus both ascended back to heaven when their task was finished).

The classic form of the saving narrative contains a battle in which seven elements can be expected to be present: (1) a war between two opposing groups with the forces of order temporarily defeated, (2) arrangements for a new leader, (3) creation of the new leader, (4) transfer of authority by the forces of order to the new leader, (5) a great battle, (6) defeat of the forces of disorder, and (7) ascendance of the hero to lordship of the cosmos.[6] This pattern is imposed on virtually every saving

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[5] Joseph Campbell devotes an entire book to this thesis, except that he uses the terms *separation, initiation* and *return.* Cf. *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XVII, 1949; reprinted as Meridian Book M22, 1956).

[6] Based on the analysis of W. Norman Brown, "The Creation Myth of the Rig Veda," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society,* LXII (1942), 88.

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story in the world. In some cases the battle is fought in the macrocosm, in others in the world of inner space, but whether describing what may be an external encounter of the forces of order and disorder or whether describing an inner experience, it is the knowledge of the victory on the part of the devotee that counts.

What, then, are the functions of such stories? Although there are many ways to view the saving story, I call attention to two functions, *anamnesis* and *paradigm.* These stories are not meaningful or true simply because they contain a modicum of history but because they place certain events—whether items of record or not—into meaningful contexts so that they can be appreciated and apprehended.

The saving story is a paradigm, an expression of a classical archetype and itself the archetype for future thought and action. Romulus, for example, was not merely the first Roman in point of time, he was the first—*i.e.,* the primal—Roman, the epitome of the glory of Rome itself. Whatever the historicity of the story of Romulus may be, it matters little. He has become the pattern for all Romans. In the functional study of Rāma, the "historical" aspects of the story can be completely ignored. More on this later when we attempt to apply these principles directly to Rāma, who is, at least for certain people, the paradigmatic Hindu, completely in tune with his *dharma,* living an idealized life.

The other side is termed *anamnesis,* which is sometimes translated as "memory," but for which I prefer "recollection."[7] In the tradition of the Greak Bible the term shows up in two very significant places. When Noah had survived the great flood, the Lord made a covenant with him, promising that "When the bow is in the clouds I will look upon it and *remember* the everlasting covenant" (Gen. 9: 16). At the end of his life, Jesus broke bread in a symbolic act interpreted by Christians to be the inauguration of a sacramental celebration, using these words, "Do this for my *anamnesis.*" In both cases, more than simple memory is involved. When the devotee

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7 The term is also used in Jungian circles. Cf. Ira Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and its Social Meaning* (New York: Grove Press, 1953), p. 32.

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participates in the cultic anamnesis, he causes the redemptive event to happen all over again, as it were, or else you might say that he transcends any temporal barriers that may exist and participates directly in the actions of deity in his life.

The Word

The retelling of the saving story is an extension of the powerful Word itself, emphasizing the importance of language in communication both among humans and between humans and deities.[8] In this context each word counts.

With his satanic dog at his feet, Goethe's Faust struggled to translate the opening words of the Fourth Gospel. So he began, "Im Anfang war das W o r t!" But there he stopped, because *Wort* was inadequate for *logos.* And he struggled,

> Wenn ich vom Geiste recht erleuchtet bin
>
> Geschreiben steht: im Angang war der Sinn,
>
> ("If I have been rightly taught by the spirit, the writing would be, 'In the beginning was the Thought'!")

This version too is insufficient, and he tried again,

> ... in Anfang war die Kraft ("*Power*")

Closer perhaps, but still

> ... in Anfang war die That ("*Deed*"),

at which point the dog, Mephistopholes in disguise, began to growl.

In choosing *deed* over *word,* Faust simply confirms the meaning of *word.* Whoever utters words sets power in motion, and uttering words is the primal deed. If I so much as say "Good morning," I place myself before you, emerging from my isolation. If I withhold my "Good morning," I withhold some of my potency.

In story—a combination of words—some words are written, some are spoken, some are mumbled, some are chanted, but words in a community together as well as enabling it to

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[8] A full-scale discussion of the *mantra* and its functions is not appropriate here.

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communicate with others. The very words, therefore, of a saving story, place one in touch with numinous power. The name *Rāma* does just that. Tulasi Das maintained that "No sooner than you pronounce the '*Ra*', all the sins are ejected out of you, and the moment you follow it up with '*ma*' the door is closed for any other sin to enter."[9] Kabirdas (weaver-saint of the fifteenth century") relates the name *Rāma* to *Om.*[10] Such sounds—*Halleluiah, Kurie Eleison,* or *Amen,* in addition, of course to *OM*[11]—are not translatable. Their repetition conveys power to those who use the symbol, and the terms will be meaningless to outsiders.

The Book

In more developed societies, words are written, and the written word commands a veneration quite beyond that of the spoken word. Although most developed religious systems have some venerated literature, a Bible as such is not a universal phenomenon. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, whatever version, must not be compared exactly to the *Qur'an* nor to the *Torah* or the *Gospels*, despite certain similarities. The *Rāmāyaṇa* does not occupy the exclusive place of the *Qur'an* in Islam, the Book dictated by Allah's messenger. It does, however, serve as one of the most significant transmitters of Hindu culture.

A sacred book reflects a value structure, and, as such, it must reflect the prevailing values of the community that enshrined it. One tells and retells the story because in such participation the events leading to salvation are recreated. Hence, to the question "Are these stories true? "we must ask at what level such a question is asked. Their truth does not lie in precise facts of history but rather in their arrangement of events—whether historical or not—into a scheme that possesses an existential character, a people's view of itself. Claims of divine revelation, and in some cases, divine dictation, stamp the approval of the believing community on the book. In the case of the Rāmāyaṇa, the account of the death of the krauñca bird near

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9 From the *Dohāvali*, quoted from Shankar Raju Naidu, "Mystic Significance of Rāma," in *Essays in Philosophy* (Madras: Ganesh & Co. n.d.), p. 442.

10,11 *Ibid.*, p. 443.

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the beginning of the book and the subsequent appearance of Lord Brahmā to Vālmīki as well as the scene near the end when Rāma himself hears the account of Kuśa and Lava, validate the story. Without prejudicing the question of historicity, an issue likely to be decided more on the basis of personal faith than historical research, these stories serve to authenticate what lies between them, showing the approval of the believing community.

The sacred book also preserves a value structure. Following the initial generation, the book serves not only as a reflector of values but the source of values for succeeding generations. The conservative nature of most religious systems renders social change difficult by labelling it impious or atheistic and investing the status quo with divine authority and supernatural sanction. Traditional systems urge one to adjust to a social order rather than to seek its abolition, a fact that may explain in part the venom with which the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been attacked by those who advocate radical changes in the social pattern of South India.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* was told and retold, enacted in temple dramas and incorporated into sculpture. Its dramatic representations were not unlike the medieval Christian mystery plays, from which the ceremonies of Holy Week developed, or the Stations of the Cross, a dramatization of the Passion narrative. Perhaps some who watched were entertained, but the performances had more than diversion in mind. They were symbolic and sacramental, the efficient cause of a blessing conferred on those whose lives were caught up in the dramas. Here was life as it ought to be lived, and for a while one could be part of it.

There is a third level to all this. A sacred literature belongs to a specific community which supplies its sanction, and on its most profound level it cannot really be shared, except as literature with an intrinsic value. When value structures of a community change—and they change inevitably—sacred books can lose vital contact. The ancient tale of Rāma has excited popular imagination, inspired works of art, and reflected values generally accepted and widely practised. But the very values illustrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are those in debate today. *Rāmarājya,* despite Gandhiji's use of the term, is not the ideal

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to which all Indian politicians aspire. It is so in every culture. American illiteracy in matters biblical is well attested, and by and large, Bible stories are no longer the staple diet of bedtime tales, yet the Bible continues to reflect a basic value orientation of western society. No culture can divorce itself from its roots. The *Rāmarajya* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has not been altogether popular in Tamilnadu where it was sometimes looked upon with a bit of suspicion.

The Role of the Teacher

Certain phenomena appear to be universal in developed religious systems, and among them is the appearance of a professional class of teachers charged with preserving sacred tradition intact. The religious teacher is not just a teacher of religion, because he is expected to embody in his own life a traditional piety, not necessarily a completely moral conduct but a life lived in accordance with cultic prescriptions. In any case, teachers precede sacred books, and when the Book appears, teachers are necessary for its explication. No religious system has allowed its scriptures to stand without interpretation.

The Hindu, a Madras daily newspaper, regularly runs a summary of religious discourses, and in one of them, it was insisted that "anyone who ventures to speak on the epic *The Rāmāyaṇa* should have the three most important qualifications—purity of tongue, an intense longing to tell the story and a thorough grounding in the subject." "Purity of the tongue," the article continued, "was attainable by constant utternce of God's names and recitation of the Vedas. The epic should be heard with sincerity and the clear understanding that Śrī Rāma is none but the Vedic Purusha....."

Despite the veneration accorded to paper and ink of scripture, the spoken word typically conveys more power. Vedic knowledge, for example, is called *śruti,* meaning primarily "what is heard". What is heard is truly seen and only he whose penances and austerities have led him to the place where he can "see" the message can teach it properly. Thus it is maintained "The *Rishi* ("enlightened seer") saw the *mantra* in *Tapas* ("austerities")."[12]

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[12] V. Raghavan, *The Indian Heritage,* (Bangalore: Indian Institute of World Culture, 1956), p. xxvi.

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The teacher becomes a vital link in transmitting knowledge, because the "naked word of scripture" is generally viewed with suspicion. An *āchārya* ("teacher") collects precepts, sets his students on the proper path, and himself practices what he preaches. One of India's most precious relationships is that of student and teacher ("guru"), a wholehearted devotion in which the student faithfully practices every minute instruction of the *guru* and, while under his care, attends to no one else. God himself is the supreme teacher, and to a student his teacher is God.

The Rāmāyaṇa

Having set forth a certain framework for the understanding of sacred literature, we must now attempt to apply it to the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself. There is no simple answer to the question, "How does India view the *Rāmāyaṇa*," and I was scarcely prepared for the variety of responses I received when I lived in India to study the *Rāmāyaṇa*. To ask anyone—Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian—about Rāma was not necessarily to elicit a rehearsal of Vālmīki's story. Frequently respondents would demur that they did not "know the Rāmāyaṇa." Ask them later about specific incidents taken from the story, and they knew it very well. Person after person would reveal a glimpse of the world as understood through references to the Rāma story.

For example, one evening a beautiful girl studying in the fifth standard in a Madras school told me about Rāma and Sītā, For her the story began when Rāma went to the forest to hunt a golden deer in order to present it to Sītā (I believe she thought it was Rāma's idea to go after the deer). Sītā was captured by ugly Rāvaṇa, and Rāma fought with Rāvaṇa "because Sītā was lonely." That was the whole story, but for a moment I had a glimpse of the world seen from her eyes, a view of her intentionally-constituted world. She had learned the story from the songs of Tyāgarāja, and what the young lady told me that pleasant evening was not the *Rāmāyaṇa* as any pandit would understand it, but the world as she saw it. I have a tape recording of a young boy who also told me about Rāma, but he never got beyond the birth story and the marriage of Rāma and Sītā (breaking the bow impressed him). I also recall with tremendous pleasure a young lad staying in our house. When

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my wife asked him, "Devender, when did the history of India begin," he replied without a moment's hesitation, "With Rāma and Sītā!"

Even if a statistical record should show that some other scriptures are read more frequently by larger numbers than the *Rāmāyaṇa*, these incidents attest to its tremendous popularity, even on a subliminal level, so that the ABT parcel service can use as their logo a picture of Hanumān carrying the mountain in full confidence that the message will be understood perfectly.

On a more adult level, I have seen flowers offered in Pūjā to the book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. I have heard it quoted as a supreme authority, silencing an opponent with a single quotation from its-hallowed pages, and my own collection contains a variety of letters and clippings praising it in unreserved terms. Another correspondent wrote:

Rāmāyaṇa is essentially the story of how man becomes God. The man who is good, loving, and compassionate to all the loving creatures indiscriminately, attains to the divine rank and is worshipped as God; but a man who is wicked, proud, and unkind loses the divinity in him and ultimately merges into ignominy.....

Probably the most revealing single incident in my experience, however, followed a lecture at a college in Andhra Pradesh, when I asked the students assembled whether they planned to tell the story of Rāma to their children. Although many spoke eloquently of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the "heart and soul of India," echoing the words of Sastri, "As long as India continues to remember Rāma and the ideals of life which He exemplified, I am satisfied that India is India," about half of those present were vehement in their rejection of the epic. Two young women, with fire in their eyes, spoke with passion. "I shall never," said one of them, "tell the story of Rāma to my daughter because I do not want her to be like Sītā; that ideal of womanhood is dead in India!" The ideal may be dead—I doubt it—but discussion about it is very much alive.

I also ran into a good many well-educated persons who made a sharp distinction between the appreciation of the literary merits of the various *Rāmāyaṇas* and any devotional attachment to them. The anti-*Rāmāyaṇa* attitudes of southern political

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movements, traceable at least to 1910 with the formation of the Dravidian association by Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar, and culminating in the figure of E. V. Rāmaswamy Naicker ("Periyar") and C. N. Anna-durai is well known. Here, as Harrison writes,

> The *Rāmāyaṇa*, so proudly hailed as a force for synthesis, becomes a basic text cited to establish Aryan iniquity. In Dravidian propaganda the southward march of Rāma to the lair of the evil king Rāvaṇa..... is nothing less than the allegorical story of the triumph of Aryan progress over the original Dravidian inhabitants of India.,..... The Dravidian movement rewrites *The Rāmāyaṇa* to cast Rāvaṇa as a Dravidian hero repelling Rāma.....[13]

Positions like these must be viewed with extreme caution. No change of culture is represented in any version of the epic as a result of the conflict, and it is doubtful that either Vālmīki or Kamban had such a thing in mind. A noted psychologist once pointed out to me that in any epic story there is a tendency for those on top in a society to identify with the hero and those on the bottom with the vanquished.

A Book of Dharma

In the earlier portion of this paper we stressed the paradigmatic nature of sacred books. Not only is Rāma a paradigm of the ideal man, a model of discriminating choice for those devoted to him, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is primarily a book of *dharma.* Whether set forth by Vālmīki, Kamban, or Tulasīdāsa, Rāma upholds (*dhṛ*) all his relationships, acting righteously to friend and foe alike.[14] Hence, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a popular *dharma śāstra* in narrative form, setting forth the principles of righteous choice.

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[13] Selig S. Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 127. Further information may be found in P.D. Dsvanesan, *The Dravida Kazhagam* (Bangalore: Christian-Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960).

[14] I am aware that Rāma has his detractors. A letter in my files reads as follows: "Since Rāma cut off the nose of Rāvaṇa's sister, Rāvaṇa had every right to take revenge. What right did Rāma have to burn Laṅkā? It is the duty of every Tamilian to 'get back his face' by destroying the Aryan symbols of Tamil disparagement and the so-called Aryan gods..... Vālmīki tells us all about Rāma drinking, eating meat, killing unlawfully (ambushes.....) How can you think of these despicable traits as attributes of a divine being?

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To be human is to choose, and to choose is to subordinate one value to a greater value structure. Few of us are presented with completely simple choices. For every call of duty, every tug at the emotions, and every human relationship demands an anxious search for the most appropriate alternative, the one most likely to uphold those values deemed most significant. The privilege of embracing an obvious good and shunning an evident evil is rarely granted, even if we admit the possibility of knowing precisely what we mean by good and evil. Instead most human choices lie in that ambiguous grey area where the most we can hope for is a decision that will buttress those relationships we value most.

On the other hand, one's life need not be a compromise. It can affirm the qualities one values most, and for this reason, value structures can be communicated through narratives that deal with the lives of men and women, their struggles against evil and adversity, better than in didactic prose. For many, the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been just such a guide.

> An American popular song once contained this refrain,
>
> The passions that thrill love, and lift you high to heaven
> are the passions that kill love, and let you fall to hell.[15]

The key that can unlock the door to life can also open the chamber of death. Knowledge that can free can also enslave. "Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path to the understanding of the self—so the wise say-—hard to tread and difficult to cross."[16]

The story of Rāma is dominated—particularly in Vālmīki's version—by the tension between Ayodhyā and Laṅkā, the conflict between *dharma* and *adharma,* but not the warfare of heaven and hell in the western sense[17], even though Rāma is always the symbol of *dharma* and Rāvaṇa of *adharma.* "Rāma is duty (*dharma*) personified," said Mārīca (iii, 37). Every character in this drama is charged with the necessity of choosing truth (*satya*) over his own convenience, even as

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15 Rogers and Hammerstein, *New Moon.*

16 *Kaṭhopaniṣad,* I. iii. 14, Nikhilananda translation.

17 Despite some passages that show that many things Rāvaṇa did were right and good, Vālmīki never refers to him as *dharmic.*

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Naciketas had to remind his father to "consider how it was with the forefathers" who never went back on their word of obligations "(*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I, i, 3).

The *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* distinguishes *laukika dharma, gārhasthasya dharma, kula dharma, varṇāśrama dharma,* and throughout the *Rāmāyaṇa*, one is acutely aware of the interrelations of these various *dharmas* and the consequent necessity of choosing just that appropriate response to each situation that will uphold the proper values for that situation. Rāma's choice was to resuscitate *dharma* so that *kāma* and *artha* can be enjoyed within legitimate bounds. He puts first the search for righteousness, knowing that all else will follow, a lesson perhaps best illustrated by his choice of the forest. The story of Rāma is the story of a man faced with a series of choices, many alternatives defensible. When he finally made his decisions, he did so without denying the values he decided against, and therein is the greatness of the story and the reason it can function as a paradigm. *Dharma* has failed if it is understood only as the choice of the obviously good over the manifestly evil. The truly dharmic life is lived *anyatra dharmād anyatrādharmād* ("beyond *dharma* and *adharma*").[18]

Statesmen and religious leaders alike have praised the ideal of *Rāmarājya,* and Gandhiji used it as the symbol of the coming perfect order, dying with the name of Rām on his lips. But throughout the epic *Rāmarājya* is something like an eschatological ideal, a vision of what can appear in the new age. Present society is in the age of *pādukārājya,* the role of the sandals, between the primal kingdom of Daśaratha and the coming perfect reign of Rāma. Present society is imperfect; we have only the tokens of the book, the age of *Pādukārājya,* while *dharmic* and *adharmic* forces are in mortal combat.

Closely associated with the paradigmatic search for *dharma* is the search for truth (*satya*). Truth in this context, however, is synonymous with true living, connoting fully as much the idea of faithfulness and morality as it does a correct correspondence with "objective reality." Truthfulness takes on a certain

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[18] Nachiketas asked Yama, "Tell me that which thou seest beyond right and wrong, beyond what is done and not done, beyond past and future." (*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I, ii, 14, Radhakrishnan trans.)

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poignancy in the Rāmāyaṇa in connection with the preservation of a good name. When Daśaratha was faced with the excruciating choice forced on him by Kaikeyī, the question of whether Rāma or Bharata would make a better *yuvarājah* was not an operative consideration. Near the end of the story Rāma's harsh words to Sītā must be viewed in the same light.

A central ethical issue is joined. Rāma, so we are told, gave up all personal claims but protected his good name at all costs. The paradigmatic Rāma is not the embodiment of the rule of law; he is the embodiment of the rule of perfect righteousness, illustrating the basic belief that "the one unchanging basis on which the success of any form of government depends is human character."[19] The truth sought is personal integrity. In this sense truth will conquer (*satyam eva jayate*). In 1965, President Radhakrishnan went so far as to say, in connection with the Pakistan war, ".....'*Satyam eva Jayate*'..... meant that if necessary, they would even sacrifice the country for the sake of truth and never truth for the country."[20] Truth, then, becomes as something to be defended.

The Battle

In the theoretical section of this paper we noted the battle motif and its seven modules. If one focuses not simply on the battle scenes themselves but on the total sweep of the epic, including its later accretions, it will be seen that the *Rāmāyaṇa* displays the same features found in the Indra-Vṛtra conflict:[21]

1. An *asura*, Rāvaṇa, has provoked the sages, contemplatives, brahmins, and gods, even interfering with the sun and the moon.
2. The gods petition Brahmā to relieve them of this demon, but a boon has been granted to Rāvaṇa making him impervious to any but a man. Viṣṇu is persuaded to incarnate himself.

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19 Dr. V. Raghavan, "Rāmāyaṇa-Triveṇī" (V) Duty to People, *Vedantha Kesari*, July, 1952, p. 2.

20 *The Hindu*, Madras, Dec. 9,1965.

21 This analysis is set forth, together with a similar treatment of the Great Goddess Story in Joanne M. Punzo, *The Devi Māhātmya: A Critical Study of a Devotional Text* (Chambersburg: Wilson College 1967).

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3. Impregnation of the barren wives of Daśaratha is accomplished by a bowl of *pāyasam* divided among the three wives.
4. Brahmā beseeches all the gods to incarnate as warrior-monkeys to aid Rāma.
5. The main body of the epic is concerned with the great battle and lesser battles of Rāma.
6. Rāvaṇa is defeated, and the gods praise Rāma.
7. Rāma rules over the three worlds.

In this conflict the three psychological modules of salvation-bearing stories are evident: (1) an affront to order, (2) the need for an incarnation, (3) the defeat of disorder as a struggle that must continually be repeated. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is a story intended to be re-enacted. The slaughter of Rāvaṇa is not just a historic event. It is an act of faith and an affirmation of *dharma,* a pledge to uphold order over disorder. The final book, the Uttara Kāṇḍa, shows clearly that the establishment of *Rāmarājya* does not mean the end of all discord. The defeat of Rāvaṇa by Rāma must be repeated over and over.

The Anamnesis

Rāmāyaṇa is the story of perpetual warfare between Ayodhyā and Laṅkā. In simple terms its message is to imitate Rāma and to eschew the works of Rāvaṇa. The story attained its popularity because it does reflect a value structure. The story of Rāma and Sītā, the *dharma* by which they lived and the *adharma* they shunned express a value system basic to much education in India. Arts—performing and visual—grow from the story, and the practice of *bhakti* with its hymns, dances, and other ceremonies has concretely shaped much of Indian life.[22] The book, however, concerns itself very little with inner feelings; it stresses external actions.

The strength of the story lies in the fact that it is a living tradition, appreciated by reflexive beings who reflect on the world in which they live. Throughout the main portion of the work *Rāmarājya* is an ideal, not yet attained. Not surprisingly,

[22] Cf. V. Raghavan, "Methods of Popular Religious Instruction in South India," *Journal of American Folklore,* LXXI (1958), pp. 336-344.

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then, popular form of *Rāmabhakti* is *Pādukābhakti,* fidelity to God both present in spirit and yet absent in his full glory and power. Veneration of the sandals and walking on the Path of Lord Rāma belong together. Neither is meaningful if devotion is only to the past. In this paper we have stressed the living tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the wave moving across many different mediums. May this symposium produce not simply firmer devotion to an ancient book but also commitment to the courageous *dharma* which each of us is called upon to practice in this generation.

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RĀMACARITAMĀNASA and ITS RELEVANCE TO MODERN AGE

By **REV. C. BULCKE**

1. Introduction

Some four hundred years ago, Goswami Tulasīdāsa composed his *Rāmacaritamānasa*. In his introduction, the author prays that his poem may be appreciated:

> *Hohu prasanna dehu bardānu*
> *Sādhu Sāmaja bhaṇiti sanamānu* (1, 14)
>
> "Show me your favour and grant this boon, that my verses may be honoured where good men are gathered together."[1]

There is no shadow of a doubt, that the poet's prayer has been heard. The *Rāmacaritamānasa* enjoys, since four centuries, among the teeming millions of North India, a popularity unequalled anywhere else.

This popularity is richly deserved. All critics agree that the *Rāmacaritamānasa* is the most excellent poem of the whole range of Hindi literature. Dr. George Grierson goes even further when he says: "I still think that Tulasīdāsa is the most important figure in the whole of Indian literature" (quoted by V. Smith, in 'Akbar The Great Mogul,' p. 420).

Dr. Vincent Smith calls the work of Tulasīdāsa, "the tallest tree in the magic garden of medieval Hindu poetry." He then goes on to say: "His name will not be found in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, or in the pages of any Muslim annalist, or in the books by European authors based on the narratives of Persian historians. Yet that Hindu was the *greatest man of his age in India*, greater even than Akbar himself, inasmuch as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women effected by the poet was an achievement infinitely more

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1 All English translations are taken from W. Hill's "The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma", Oxford University Press, 1952.

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lasting and important than any or all of the victories gained in war by the monarch" (*ibid.* p. 417).

2. The purpose of Tulasīdāsa

To atrive at a correct appreciation of Tulasīdāsa's *Rāmāyaṇa*, we must keep in mind the poet's intention.

His chief aim was not the creation of an immortal poem, but rather the exposition of the royal road of devotion to God, the only way of salvation. Tulasīdāsa saw that the common people were very much impressed by yogic practices, which they admired but could not imitate, that they were misled by various esoteric doctrines and confused by the many sects, each with its own ritual and philosophical tenets. He realised that real religion was far less complicated. He says in his best and deepest work, the *Vinayapatrikā* (no. 173): *bahu mata muni, bahu pantha puranani, jahantahan jhagaro so,* which means: "The *munis* propound many opinions, there are many ways of salvation described in the purāṇas and also quite a lot of bickering", and he adds: *guru kahyo Rāma-bhajana niko mohi lagat raja-dagaro so*—"My guru told me devotion to Rāma is the best way. To me it seems to be the royal road to salvation."

When describing Kaliyuga in the last para of his *Rāmacaritamānasa*, (*RCM*), he makes allusion to the prestige of the yogis and ascetics who mislead the people with regard to real religion:

> *Nirācara jo Śruti patha tyāgi/kalijuga*
> *soi gyāni so birāgi/jake nakh aru jaṭā bisāla*
> *soi tāpasa prasiddha kalikāla.*
> *Aśubha besh bhūshan dhare bhacchabhacha je khahi*
> *Tei jogi, tei siddha nara, pūjya te kalijuga mahi* (7, 98)

> "Unprincipled deserters of the Vedic way were styled the wise and the ascetic in that Kaliyuga and those who were long nails and bound their hair in massive coils, the Kaliyuga acclaimed as penitents. These who attired themselves in ghastly ornaments and ate all kinds of food, forbidden or permitted, were held to be ascetics and adepts and worthy of all reverence in that age."

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Strictly speaking, this is a description of a former Kaliyuga, but there is little doubt that Tulasīdāsa meant the itinerant yogīs of his own time, who were addicted to the above mentioned practices. Tulasīdāsa repeats again and again, that in Kaliyuga, real religion does not consist in these external practices, but in devotion to Rāma—

Kalijuga joga na jagya na gnānā
Eka Adhāra Rāma guna gānā (7, 193)

"In the Kaliyuga there is no need of austerity, sacrifice or knowledge; the singing of Rāma's praise is the only sure means of salvation."

3. Causes of the popularity of RCM

If Tulasīdāsa has been successful in bringing his message to countless millions, this is due to three causes. The first is the universal human appeal of his conception of *Bhakti* (devotion), and will be explained later. The second is that in order to propound his conception of devotion, Tulasīdāsa did not write a theological treatise but, in the words of Emerson, "hitched his wagon to a star", and retold in his own inimitable way the already popular Rāma story. Long before the Christian era, the genius of Vālmīki had worked a miracle, similar to the one of Homer. Itinerant singers had brought his *Rāmāyaṇa* to countless villages and cities. The whole of Sanskrit literature bears the imprint of Vālmīki and the Rāma-story was for centuries the subject-matter of poetry and drama throughout the Indian subcontinent and a large part of Asia, especially Indochina and Indonesia. The extraordinary influence of Vālmīki is due to the pathos and charm of the Rāma-story itself, the artistic merit of his poetry and the vivid portrayal of high moral values. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki conquered the heart of religious-minded India, chiefly because of the importance it attaches to things of the spirit, because of its noble conception of the sanctity of married love and the sacredness of a pledge, its high ideals of duty, truthfulness and self-control, its living examples of domestic and social virtues, its deep faith in the ultimate meaning of life as a struggle between good and evil. It is precisely this ethical aspect of the original *Rāmāyaṇa* that is usually singled out for special praise in Indian sources. The

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Padma Purāṇa says that in the Rāma-story "we meet face to face the rules of *dharma*, a woman's fidelity to her husband, deep brotherly affection and youth's devotedness to the elders. In its verses proper conduct between masters and servants is personified, and before our eyes, punishment is meted out to the evil-doer by the scion of Raghu" (*Pātāla Khaṇḍa*, 66, 128-9).

Tulasīdāsa has acknowledged his debt to Vālmīkī in the following words, "The sages of old having sung Hari's glorious renown, it will be easy for me, my friend, to follow in their footsteps. A river may be very broad, but if a king has built a bridge across it, even very small tiny ants (*pipīlikau parama laghu*) may mount it and pass to the other side with ease. Even so I shall take heart of grace and relate the charming story of Raghupati" (1, 14).

The third cause of the unparalleled popularity of *RCM* is the poetic genius of Tulasīdāsa. He says in the introduction of his poem, "*Kabi na hou nahi bachana pravīnu sakala kalā saba vidyā hīnu.*" (1, 9)

"I am no poet, nor am I skilled in speech; all ignorant am I of every art and science", but in spite of that he is quite conscious of his poetic talents. In the second part of his introduction he writes that when the poet contemplates the lake of Rāma's acts with the eye of the soul and plunges into its waters, "his heart is filled with bliss and ecstacy and swells with a flood of love and happiness. Then flows out the beauteous stream of poetry, filled with the water of Rāma's stainless glory." (1, 39)

Tulasīdāsa has a supreme felicity of expression; dozens and dozens of his verses have become proverbs. He has a truly marvellous gift of effortless alliteration. His verse flows naturally. His language is very simple, so much so that illiterate villagers listen with rapt attention to the recitation of his work and understand his message. Eternal truths and moral aphorisms abound but the construction of his verse is never involved. I often quote the following: "*Jīva na laha sukha hari-pratikūla*" No soul can find peace, if at variance with God" (*RCM* 7, 122). Therefore, in spite of his disclaimer quoted above, Tulasī, no less than Vālmīkī, was a poet by God's grace, and he used his talent to proclaim his message.

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The greatness and also the popularity of *RCM* is due to the above-mentioned three factors. Tulasīdāsa has compared the company of the saints to a living moving Prayāga in the world, the confluent of Gaṅgā, Yamunā of Rāmacarita and the Sarasvatī of truly great effortless poetic art.

4. The Sources of RCM

Although shorter than Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *RCM* is very long. The translation by W. Hill into English prose runs into 500 demi-octavo pages. It follows in broad lines the story of Vālmīki and is divided into seven Kāṇḍas (books), bearing the names as given by Vālmīki, except that the Yuddhakāṇḍa is called Laṅkā-Kāṇḍa. The extent of the Kāṇḍas varies greatly. The first two books of more or less of equal length occupy three fifths of the whole poem. The following three books consist of some seventy pages altogether, Kiṣkindhā being the shortest with fifteen pages. The sixth and seventh books are nearly equal in length and number 65 and 69 pages respectively.

The poem of Tulasīdāsa is in no way a translation of the original epic. Vālmīki's object is to tell the story of a royal hero, a Maryādā Puruṣottama, an ideal man of great valour and a delicate sense of propriety. In the centuries that followed, Rāma came to be considered as, not only an incarnation of Viṣṇu along with his brothers, but as an incarnation of the supreme Brahman and the object of a Bhakti cult. The most famous book, exposing Rāma-bhakti, is the *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa*, one of the main sources of Tulasīdāsa. He borrowed several incidents from the Rāma-dramas, *viz.*, the *Mahānāṭaka* and the *Prasanna Rāghava*.

Besides these four works dealing with the Rāma-story, Tulasīdāsa has been influenced very greatly, much more than is usually suspected, by the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The main elements of his concept of Bhakti agree to a great extent with these two works, the difference being that Kṛṣṇa is replaced by Rāma as object of devotion.

5. Contents of the RCM

Tulasīdāsa wrote his poem in Avadhi, a literary dialect of Hindi, using mainly two metres: *Dohā* and *Caupāī*. He dates his

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work Samwat 1631, *i.e.*, 1574 A.D. Barring the first and last book, Tulasīdāsa narrates the Rāma-story as described by Vālmīkī, with one important change, based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. The real Sītā enters the fire before Rāvaṇa arrives to capture her. Rāma tells Sītā:

> *Sunahu priya brata rucira suśīla/mai kachu karabi lalita naralīla/Tumha Pāvaka mahu karahu nivasa* (3, 24)

"Hearken, beloved wife, faithful, beautiful and virtuous; I am about to play an engaging game as man; do you make your abode in fire till I have extirpated the demons."

Thereupon Sītā enters the fire and a shadow Sītā takes her place (*nija pratibimba rakhi taha Sītā*). By this expedient Sītā is saved from the touch of Rāvaṇa, who carried a shadow Sītā to Laṅka. This shadow Sītā enters the fire at the Agni-Parīkṣā and the real Sītā is restored to Rāma. Of the subject matter not based on Vālmīkī, the following deserve special mention here:

(1) The incidents of Rāma's childhood, based on the *Bhāgavata Purāna* and *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*.

(2) The meeting of Rāma and Sītā in the flower-garden of Mithilā, before the breaking of the bow; based on *Prasanna Rāghavṇ*.

(3) The breaking of the bow in the presence of many kings called to the Swayamvara of Sītā; based on the Sanskrit *Rāma-Nāṭakas*.

(4) The arrival of Paraśurāma immediately after the breaking of the bow and the ensuing conversation between Rāma, Lakṣmana and Paraśurāma; based mainly on the *Mahānāṭaka*.

(5) The conversation of Rāvaṇa and Aṅgada in Laṅkā-kāṇḍa and later the conversation of Sītā and Trijaṭā, based on the *Mahānāṭaka*.

First Half of Bālakāṇḍa

This part of the *RCM* owes nothing to Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Vālmīki makes Rāma's journey to Mithilā the occasion of

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narrating a great number of legends, which are omitted by Tulasīdāsa. The subject-matter of the first part of Bālakāṇḍa can be divided as follows:

(1) A long introduction containing pages of invocation, an apology for the use of the vernacular and his own unworthiness as a poet, the praise of the name of Rāma, and finally a long description of his work, which he compares to a Mānasarovara, a sacred lake (*Dohā* 1-43).

(2) The beginning of the dialogue of two sages: Yāgyavalkya and Bharadvāja. Yāgyavalkya promises to repeat, for Bharadvāja's benefit, the dialogue of Śiva and Pārvatī (*Dohā* 44-47).

(3) A long Śiva Carita, wherein neither Yāgyavalkya nor Śiva are the narrators. The poet himself tells the story of the self-immolation of Satī, the penance of Pārvatī and her subsequent marriage to Śiva (*Dohā* 48-103).

(4) The beginning of the Śiva-Pārvatī dialogue (*Dohā* 104-120).

(5) The causes of the Incarnation of Viṣṇu (*Dohā* 121-183). Besides a general reason, based on the *Bhagavadgītā*, five particular reasons are given. They are the stories of Jaya-Vijaya, of Jālandhara, of Nārada, of Manu-Śatarūpā and lastly of Pratāpabhānu. The last story inroduces the description of Rāvaṇa's misdeeds, the visit of the gods to Viṣṇu and the latter's promise to incarnate himself as the son of Daśaratha and Kausalyā. The rest of the Bālakāṇḍa, from the sacrifice of Daśaratha, follows the traditional Rāma-story, with the exceptions mentioned above.

The Last Book (Uttarakāṇḍa)

This book is clearly divided in two parts. The first part (*Dohā* 1-52) brings the Rāma-story to an end. The original *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* stopped with Yuddhakāṇḍa and ended with the coronation of Rāma and the description of *Rāma-rājya*. Tulasīdāsa has transferred this to his Uttarakāṇḍa. He further

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mentions the birth of the two sons Lava and Kuśa, but omits the repudiation of Sītā. Tulasīdāsa adds two allocutions of Rāma, One, to his brothers, on the characteristics of the saints. The other, addressed to the citizens of Ayodhyā, on the excellence of the Bhaktimārga.

In the second part (*Dohā* 52-130) Śiva repeats to Pārvatī the dialogue of Bhuśuṇḍi and Garuḍa. This contains a long description of Kaliyuga and an exposition of the necessity of *Dāsya Bhakti* for salvation.

6. Genesis of the RCM

Although Tulasīdāsa has presented his poem in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī, there are large portions where the poet himself is the narrator and Śiva is mentioned in the third person. The only possible explanation of this phenomenon is that Tulasīdāsa, at first, had no intention to present his work in the form of a dialogue. This has been the unanimous conclusion of all critics, who have examined this problem. They generally agree to distinguish three stages in the composition of *RCM* but when they try the impossible task to determine exactly the extent of each stage, they offer different solutions. It is safer to be satisfied with a general outline of the three stages.

First Stage

Tulasīdāsa, at first, told himself the story of Rāma. He is the sole narrator in the introduction, the second part of the Bāla-kāṇḍa and the entire Ayodhyākāṇḍa. The last verse of the Bāla-kāṇḍa calls it Sīyā-Raghuvīra-Vivāha. Similarly, the Ayodhyā-kaṇḍa is called Bharata-carita. The following kāṇḍas have no such designation. This suggests a special status for the first two kāṇḍas, which were perhaps circulated separately. It was probably the renown of these poems that made Tulasīdāsa decide to give his poem the framework of a religious book.

Second Stage

In any case he did change his method of narration and followed the example of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* by presenting the Rāma-story in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and

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Pārvatī. This required, as is usual in the purāṇas, a sub-dialogue. Tulasīdāsa therefore introduced the dialogue of Yāgyavalkya and Bharadvāja, and made Yāgyavalkya repeat the Śiva-Pārvatī dialogue. He added the long section about the causes of Viṣṇu's incarnation and changed the very beginning of the Rāma-carita, to make it agree with his new framework.

The rest of what he had written in the first stage, he did not change at all, but proceeded to complete the story of Rāma, beginning from the Āraṇya-kāṇḍa. From there onwards he has adopted a new attitude. He condenses the story, on the model of *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa*, which he follows very closely, especially in Āraṇya-kāṇḍa and Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa. Whereas Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa alone has 133 pages, the three following kāṇḍas together run into 72 pages only. The Rāma-story concludes with the first part of the Uttara-kāṇḍa. In all these kāṇḍas it is Śiva who tells the story and addresses Pārvatī again and again.

When Śiva has finished the Rāma-story and Pārvatī has thanked him, we would expect that mention be made again of the sub-dialogue of Yāgyavalkya and Bharadvāja, as it is usual in the purāṇas to end by re-introducing the sub-dialogue. The reason Tulasīdāsa has not done so, brings us to the third and last stage of the composition of *RCM*.

Third Stage

At the end of the dialogue of Śiva-Pārvatī, Śiva repeats to Pārvatī, the dialogue of the crow Bhuśuṇḍi and Garuḍa, with Bhuśuṇḍi as the chief narrator. It seems almost sure that Tulasīdāsa must have acquired a *Rāmāyaṇa* wherein Bhuśundi addresses Garuḍa and came gradually more and more under the influence of that *Rāmāyaṇa*. In quite a few places of the second draft he quotes aphorisms addressed to Garuḍa. Finally, he decided to add the dialogue Bhuśundi-Garuḍa to his *RCM* and this constitutes the last part of his poem, wherein he calls it *RCM* and exposes once more, in a more Viśiṣṭa Advaita way, his concept of Bhakti. This new addition required a second part of his introduction, in which Tulasīdāsa calls his poem *RCM*

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whereas in the first part of the introduction, he calls it Rāmacarita. It is therefore not impossible that this name has been borrowed from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, with the Bhuśuḍi Garuḍa-dialogue.

The Bālakāṇḍa contains a long Siva-carita, wherein Śiva is spoken of in the third person and which is not mentioned in the table of contents of *RCM* as given in the last part of the Uttara-kāṇḍa. We may conclude that this portion, probably an independent poem, was added to the third draft last of all.

The new matter of the third draft consists therefore of (1) the second half of the Uttarakāṇḍa, (2) the second half of the introduction and (3) the Śiva-carita.

7. The message of Tulasīdāsa

The essence of Tulasīdāsa's *Bhakti-mārga* consists in a humble acknowledgement of one's sinfulness, a serious and persistent endeavour to fulfil God's will and a trustful surrender to God. In other words *Dāsya-bhakti*. In his Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, Tulasī has made Bharata the ideal devotee. He goes to the forest to call the exiled Rāma back and return the kingdom to him. But when Rāma lets him take the final decision, he humbly says: "There is no better way to serve a good master than by obeying his command "(*Agja-sama na susahiba sevā*) and let Rāma decide what is best (Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Caupāi 301). This is Tulasīdāsa's way of letting the true devotee say to God, "Thy will be done."

The *Bhakti-mārga* of Tulasīdāsa has several characteristics, which make it a truely royal road to God and must have been instrumental in the salvation of millions.

(*a*) The first of these characteristics is the *insistence on moral conduct.* As mentioned above, this was one of the main features of *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* and is moreover a characteristic of most subsequent Rāma-stories. Tulasī is convinced that, on the one hand, no real bhakti is possible without good conduct (*ācaraṇa*) and a determined effort to control one's passions, and that, on the other hand, no one can achieve this without the help of God's grace. In the introduction of his *RCM* (*i.e.*, the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts) he writes: "I have here (at Ayodhyā)

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begun this sacred story, destructive of all lust and pride and hypocrisy in him who bears it. Its name is the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts, and those who listen to it are refreshed; a soul that burns with the fever of worldly desire, like an elephant in a forest fire, is happy if it plunge into this lake. It puts an end to wicked ways and all the sin of the kaliyuga." (*Caupai* 35).

(*b*) Morality, therefore, is, according to Tulasī, the foundation of religion and an essential condition of advancing along the road to God. When he uses the world "royal road" with regard to the Rāma-Bhakti, he does so advisedly. The way of salvation is open to all, and every man is invited to follow it. This is its second characteristic. Tulasī is convinced that every human being is given the means of salvation and has the responsibility to use them, otherwise he will only have to blame himself afterwards: "It is great good fortune to be born as a man. The human body is an instrument for pious practices, it is the gateway to deliverance; and those who have been born as men and still have not won heaven suffer torment in the next world, and beating their heads in vain remorse, falsely assign the blame to fate and destiny and God "(*RCM* 7, 43),

Tulasī again and again insists that the way of devotion is easy and needs no special state of life. In his Ayodhyākāṇḍa he compares the life of Bharata, his model devotee who rules his kingdom and performs his normal duties, to the life of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, who practice penance in the forest, and then he gives his verdict in favour of Bharata!

Lakhana Rāma Sīyā Kanana Basahi
Bharat Bhavan Basi tapa tanu Kasahi
Dou Disi Samujhi Kahata Sabu Logu
Saba Bidhi Bharata Sarahana Jogu

"Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma and Sītā dwelt in the forest; Bharata, dwelling at home, tortured his body with austerities. Looking at the matter from both sides, all said that Bharata was in every way worthy of praise (*Caupāi* 326). In his *Vinaya-patrikā* (No. 173) he goes even further and bluntly states that "the mind becomes corrupt when one takes *sannyāsa*, just as an unbaked earthen pot gets spoiled when water is poured into it."

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Bigarata mana sanyāsa leta, jala nawata āma gharo so, Tulasīdāsa insists on moral conduct, advocates humility and preaches total self-surrender to God, but he maintains that this is within the reach of the common man. He often warns the people not to be taken in by Yogīs and wandering Sannyāsis. His message is meant, first and foremost, for the inmates of the grhasthāśrama, the people living in domestic life.

Although he believes in the caste-system as the framework of social life, nobody, however low his caste, is excluded from Tulasīdāsa's Bhakti Mārga. When Śabarī tells Rāma, "I am a woman of low caste and altogether ignorant"—

Adhama jāti mai jaramati bhari (3, 34)

Rāma answers, "Hearken lady, to my words: there is but one relationship I recognize, the relationship of *Bhakti*."

Manau ek bhagati kara nata (3, 34)

When the forest dwellers come to greet Rāma on his arrival at Citrakūṭa, Tulasīdāsa exclaims, 'That Lord, whom the Vedas cannot define nor the mind of the sage comprehend, the home of compassion, listened to the words of the Kirātas as a father to the prattling of his child. Nothing but love is dear to Rāma—

Rāmahi kevala premu Piāra (II, 136)

(*c*) A third characteristic of Tulasīdāsa's concept of religion is its social involvement. However ardent may be one's devotion to God, Tulasī is very anxious to remind his readers, again and again, that the touchstone of true devotion is the attitude to our fellowmen. Besides his insistence on moral conduct and the portrayal of his characters as models of domestic virtues he often mentions *parahita* (doing good to others) as an essential characteristic of the genuine devotee. He realised that, all too often, *udāsīnata* (turning one's back to the world) had been presented as an ideal attitude of the man in search of God. The following quotations are from his RCM—

Parihita sarisa dharma nahi bhāī
Parapīrā sama nahi adhamāī

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"Brother, there is no religious duty like doing good to others, no vileness like doing them harm" (7, 41: words of Rāma addressed to Bharata).

Parahita basa Jinha ke mana mahī
tinha kahu jaga durlabha kachu nahī

"Those in whose hearts dwells desire for the good of others find nothing in the world too hard to win" (3: 34: words addressed by Rāma to the vulture Jaṭāyu, who died in his attempt to save Sītā from Rāvaṇa).

Rāma-bhagata, parahita nirata, para-dukh dukhi, dayāla,
bhagata-śiromani bharata te jani darapahu surapāla

"Rāma's faithful servants are devoted to the good of others and sorrow when they sorrow, full of compassion; and Bharata is the chief of votaries. Fear him not, O King of heaven" (2, 219: spoken by the guru of the gods to Indra).

Dambha māna mada karhino kau
bhuli na dehi kumaraga pau
gavahi sunahi sada mama līlā,
Hetu rahita parahita rata śilā

"They display no pride or self-conceit or arrogance, nor ever dream of setting foot upon the path of vice. They are ever singing or listening to my sportive acts; unselfishly devoted to the good of others" (3, 46: Rāma describing the virtues of the saints).

Compassion and forgiveness too are catalogued by Tulasī as characteristics of the saints.

Santa hṛdaya navanīta samānā
kaha kabinha pari kahai na jānā
nija paritāpa dravahi navanītā
para dukha dravahi santa supunītā

"Poets have said that the hearts of saints are like butter, but they missed the truth of the matter; for butter melts of its own heat, but the most holy saints melt when another is tried in the fire" (*tapa* mean both heat and affliction. The words are spoken by Garuḍa to Bhuśuṇḍi : *ibid.* 7, 125).

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Santa asantanhi kai asi karanī
jimi kuṭhāra candana ācaranī
kātai parasu malaya, sunu bhāī,
nija guna dei, sugandha basāī

"The behaviour of the saint and the sinner resembles the conduct of the sandal-tree and the axe; for the axe cuts down the tree, but—mark it, brother—the sandal sheds its natural fragrance on the axe." (*ibid.* 7, 37; words by Rarna to Bharata. We find here a poetic expression of "do good to those who hate you").

(*d*) Tulasīdāsa occasionally mentions, without disapprobation, other ways of salvation (*jnāna-mārga, karma-mārga*) and various religious sects. This is the reason why he is often spoken of as *samanvaya-vādī,* an advocate of *Samanvaya,* which means: co-ordination, harmony, reconciliation of different views.

But Tulasī was definitely not an eclectic and did not aim at reconciling various religious systems. He has, in many places, unequivocally proclaimed the supremacy and indispensability of *bhakti*, and going further still, the futility of knowledge and religious practices, if one is without *bhakti*. A few quotations must suffice. We give four extracts of the last book of the *RCM*:

Prem bhakti jala binu Raghurāī
Abhi-antara mala kabahu na jāī

"So Raghurai, without the water of loving devotion, the inner man cannot be cleansed of defilement" (do. 49, spoken by Agastya to Rāma).

Gyāna āgama pratyūha anekā
Sādhana kaṭhina na mana kahu ṭekā
Karata kaṣṭa bahu pavai koū
Bhaktihīna mohi priya nahi soū

"The way of knowledge is hard to pursue and there are many obstacles; the means thereto are difficult and there is no sure footing for the mind; and though with infinite trouble a man should find it, yet he is not dear to me if he be without bhakti." (do. 45 spoken by Rāma and addressed to the citizens of Ayodhyā).

Gyāna-pantha kṛpāna kai dhārā
parata khageśa hoi nahi bara

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"The way of knowledge is the edge of a sword; very soon one falls therefrom, O King of birds" (do. 119, spoken by Bhuśuṇḍi to Garuḍa, the king of birds).

At the end of the Rāma-story, the family priest of the royal house of Ayodhyā, comes to visit Rāma and says:

Uparohitya karma ati manda
Beda purāna sumṛiti kara nindā

"The duties of a family priest are very despicable, the vedas and purāṇas and other scriptures treat them with contempt."

He, Vasiṣṭha, has accepted this office, only because he was assured that the supreme Brahman would become the king of Ayodhyā.

Tulasī is no less outspoken in his *Vinayapatrikā*. We quote three passages:

Vākya jnāna atyanta nipuna
Bhava pāra nā pāvai koi
Nisi-graha madhya dīpa ki batanha
Tama nivṛtta nahi hoi

"Discussions about religious knowledge, however clever they may be, will not help any one to cross the ocean of rebirth. By discussing about light in a dark house, you will not be able to drive away the darkness. (No. 123)

Sanjama japa, tapa, nema, dharma, brata,
bahu bheṣaja-samudaī
Tulasīdāsa bhava-roga Rāma prema-bina nahi jaī.

"Tulasīdāsa says that there are many remedies such as self-control, recitation of sacred formulas, austerities, observances, religious practices and vows but none of them will cure the disease of rebirth, unless there be loving devotion to the feet of Rāma." (No. 81)

Joga jaga japa birāga tapa sutīrtha atata
Bandhibe ko bhava-gayaṇda reṇu ki raju batata

"Yogic practices, nightly vigils, recitation of sacred formulas, renunciation, austerities and visiting pilgrimage-places all these are as useless, as if one would endeavour to twine a rope with sand in order to tie up the elephant of rebirth." (No. 129)

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8. The relevance of Tulasīdāsa's message to Modern Age

(*a*) Modern critics not infrequently accuse Tulasīdāsa of medieval ideas, especially his defence of monarchy and the caste-system, his glorification of the Brahmins, his low esteem of women. The answer to these criticisms is that Tulasīdāsa was not a social or political reformer and never intended to advocate changes in the political or social structure of his time. His one aim is to teach to royal road (The *Rājamārga*) of *bhakti*. His derogatory remarks about women are all of them translations of Sanskrit *Nītivākyas*, and reflect therefore traditional opinions.

As a matter of fact Tulasīdāsa seems to have foreseen these criticisms. In his introduction he compares his poem to a stream, filled with the water of Rāma's stainless glory:

Rāma bimala jasa jala bharita so

and adds that "social and scriptural doctrine are its four banks."

Loka veda mata manjula Kula (1, 39)

It seems that he wanted to stress the fact that he exposes his vision of Rāma-*bhakti*, according to the prevalent social opinions (*Lokamata*) and the teachings of scripture (*Vedānta*). The same may be said of the philosophical ideas that find expression in his *RCM*. At times they reflect the monism of Śankara and at other times the Viśiṣṭa–Advaita (qualified monism) of Rāmānuja. They found a place in his poem, because both were commonly held in his time. Tulasīdāsa remains independent. In his *Vinayapatrikā* we read:

"Some say it (creation) is true, some say it is false, and some hold that both are equally true; Tulasīdāsa says, who ever abandons these three misconceptions, he alone knows himself."

Tulasīdāsa pariharai tini Bhrama,
So āpana pahichanai (No. 111)

As regards his personal opinions about the caste-system, he has given a glimpse of them in the description of *Rāmārajya*, where he says that "every man loved his neighbours."

Saba nara karahi paraspara prītī (7, 21)

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"Each husband was true to one wife, and each wife was loyal to her husband in thought and word and deed."

Ekanāri braja rata saha jharī
To mana baca krama pati hitakārī (7, 22)

And finally

"Most beautiful of all was the royal *ghāṭa*, where men of all castes could bathe."

Rajaghāṭa saba bidhi sundarabara
Majjahi taha barana chariu nara (7, 29)

It is relatively easy to answer the above-mentioned criticisms. But the problem of the relevance of the Rāma-story to modern age goes much deeper. A new generation is growing up, which does not believe in any incarnation or even in the existence of a Supreme Being.

(*b*) The chief aim of Tulasīdāsa is to give a message about *Bhagavad-bhakti*, but those who do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being can still admire the undoubted genuine poetic art of Tulasīdāsa, just as, without believing in the theology of Dante, one can admire his Divina Commedia. Even for them the *RCM* remains a great cultural document containing the traditional beliefs of centuries, innumerable mythological stories and poetic conventions and conceits that have charmed millions of his countrymen.

(*c*) However, the number of such people is relatively small. The great majority of the modern generation believes in the existence of a Supreme Being and in the spiritual nature of man. For all these *RCM* has a message, whether they believe in any particular incarnation or not. This massage contains the essential elements of genuine devotion to God, as expounded by the mystical writers of all religions: namely, importance of moral conduct, a great awareness of God's majesty and man's sinfulness, the relative unimportance of ritual and finally a genuine desire to promote the welfare of others.

The popularity of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and the voluminous Rāma-literature of many centuries, is a monument to the idealism of India, its high esteem of moral values and its belief in the ultimate triumph of good over evil. In the same

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way, the enthusiastic response of the millions of northern India to the message of *RCM* testifies to the deep-seated religious belief and spontaneous piety of the soul of India.

Note: Tulasīdāsa was well aware of the fact that he made his own choice among the many incidents of the Rāma-story, as narrated by innumerable authors before him. His Rāmacarita is not to be taken as history, but as an illustration of the infinite mercy of the Supreme Being, who became manifest for the sake of his devotees.

He even admits the possibility of the Rāma-story to be taken as an allegory. He describes the evil condition of the world just before Rāma's incarnation in the following words: "No words can describe the dreadful iniquity the demons wrought; their great ambition was to hurt; what limit could there be to their ill-doing? Evil doers flourished; thieves and gamblers and lechers who coveted their neighbour's goods and wives; those too, who honoured not mother or father or gods, and compelled the good to serve them. People who act thus, Bhavāni, hold thou to be N*iśicara* (i.*e.*, demons, followers of Rāvaṇa; *cf.* 1,183).

Another passage of the Yuddakāṇḍa points to the allegorical nature of Rāma's struggle against Rāvaṇa—

> "Seeing that Rāvaṇa was mounted on a chariot and Raghuvīra on foot, Vibhīṣaṇa was apprehensive." Rāma gave him this answer, "The victor needs another kind of chariot. Heroism and courage are the wheels of that chariot; truth and virtuous conduct its firm-set flags and pennants; strength, discretion, self-control, and unselfish action are its horses, harnessed with compassion, kindness and impartial judgement. The worship of God is its skillful charioteer..... There is no foe, my friend, who can conquer him who rides upon this chariot of righteousness" (6, 80)

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VALIDITY OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA VALUES

By **SUKUMARI BHATTACHARJI**

Ethical values were not inculcated through abstract tenets which would be too unintelligible to the masses; the new religious trend directed its attention towards the vast majority of the people. Therefore from the demand for a popular religion which would put forward ethical values not by the new religious trend, a new genre in religious literature came into being, *viz.*, the epic. It satisfied the basic demands of the day; it was soterial, it was heroic and full of action with plenty of appeal for the popular mind—and it was primarily ethical in content[1]; a new set of values was presented through concrete characters and situations. The values inculcated lived and moved before the people; the narrative held their attention powerfully and this is the source of power of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. For the two epics exercise a kind of influence in India which can be compared only with that of the *Bible* in the West. The two epics were composed at a time when they were the sole mass media used for the admonition and edifications of the people. Down the ages through public recitation, the epics have exerted a significant and formative influence in the nation's emotional, aesthetic and moral life. Songs have been composed on the *Rāmayāṇa* theme, plays based on it, epics and ballads have derived their subject matter and values from it. People—for the most part illiterate—sit, hear and watch these in rapt attention, imbibe these values and carry them in their subconscious. Thus slowly but surely the epic values have become firmly embedded in the collective unconscious and have been accepted as the valid code of conduct. We hear: 'one should behave as Rāma did and not as Rāvaṇa.'[2] National epics

[1] We hear of three types of literary composition: 'gurusammita' *i.e.*, scriptures with 'do's and do not's like the Vedas; then 'Sakhisammita', epics etc. which make the ethical lessons palatable through narratives; and finally 'kāntāsammita' *i.e.*, poetry and drama where the lesson is not stated but is left to be inferred.

[2] Rāmādivat pravartitavyam na Rāvaṇādivat; also of 'Yathā hi kurute rājā prajā tamanuvartate'. *Rāmāyaṇa* VII. 43, 19.

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everywhere present eternal humanistic values through aesthetically convincing characters; people 'see' these values, are impressed with their truth and subconsciously emulate them. Vālmīki after bursting forth into an inspired stanza asks Nārada, 'who answers to this catalogue of high moral virtues'?[3] Nārada says: 'Not even among the gods do I find one endowned with all these virtues.'[4] The Valgate edition adds: 'Hear of the great *man* who has all these virtues.'[5] So the hero is not a god, but a man, for, only a man could become a convincing ethical model. The *Rāmāyaṇa* performs this task by creating a set of convincing characters, placing them in complex, critical situations and by presenting moral acts together with their causes and effects. What enhances the value of the epic is that in it there is no character totally good or totally evil. Even the best three characters—Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa—behave questionably at times. Also, the characters look true to life because there is no major or sudden change of heart, although in many instances they do change. The adult attitude of accepting the fact that people seldom, if ever, undergo radical moral change renders the epic aesthetically acceptable and prevents it from being merely romantic or juvenile.

Temptation is a crisis situation and all the .major characters face real temptations; it is through their response to them that they become or remain good or bad. Transgression from the accepted code of ethics is portrayed sinful—but as in all major literary products, on the *Rāmāyaṇa* too, what constitutes its essence is its attempt at revaluation of the accepted values. This is achieved by placing the characters in critical situations and letting them deliberate, act and suffer consequences.

These critical situations are of two kinds (1) obvious temptations to deflect them from the path of virtue, *i.e.*, from the broad humanistic values for the sake of selfish, personal gains. But there are also those other situations, (2) where a

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3 Ko hyasmin sāmpratam loke guṇavān kaśca vīryavān. Dharmajñaśca kṛtajnaśca satyavākyo drḍhavrataḥ. Cāritreṇa ca ko yuktaḥ sarvabhūteṣu ko hitaḥ. Vidvān kaḥ kaḥ samarthaśca kaścaikahpriyadarśanaḥ. Ātmavān ko jitakrodho matimān ko 'nasūyakaḥ. Kasya bibhyati devāśca jātaroṣasya samyuge. I : 1 : 2-4.

4 Devaeṣvapi na paśyāmi kañcidebhirgunairyutam I : 6 : 8.

5 Śrūyatam tu gunairebhir yo yukto naracandramāh.

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character faces; a conflict arising from two sets of contradictory values—both accepted traditionally and both apparently equally valid, but the situation demands that he choose one. Such situations test the real moral fibre and only the great or good, *i.e.*, the significant characters pass the test.

Today the *Rāmāyaṇa* ethics is part of the Indian's mental make-up, even though the socio-economic and political background is so utterly different. At the subconsicous level the Indian mind is steeped with the *Rāmāyaṇa* lore and charged with its moral values; so, on this level its validity still persists.

Let us now examine some of the characters in crisis situations. The first figure which attracts our attention is Daśaratha whose eldest son Rāma was the joy and pride of his life. When Viśvāmitra came to ask for the young boy's help against the monsters, the old king was faced with a really significant choice: fear of losing Rāma was very real, so he could either go back upon his promise to the sage for his own selfish interest or he could keep his promise to the sage and perhaps lose his son in the process. It was a tough choice for the old king, but ultimately he kept his promise and pacified the irate sage when he put it to him that breaking a promise was unworthy of a king in the line of Raghu.[6]

What was the moral issue involved here? The interest of one person against that of the sacrificing sages; selfish love and joy against social welfare. This gives meaning to the act and makes it morally significant.

A similar situation was faced by Sagara who in the interest of his subjects banished the miscreant son Asamañja. The whole episode is on a minor key, because Sagara was not so fond of Asamañja, but banishing a prince and giving the kingdom to a younger son violated the accepted norm of primogeniture. Sagara took a morally significant step, compromised social prestige by publicly denouncing and banishing Asamañja. The option of moral slothfulness was there: he could have maintained a status quo and let things drift. Instead, he took an

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[6] Pūrvamartham pratiśrutya pratijñām hātumicchasi. Rāghavāṇāmayukto'yam kulasyāsya viparyayaḥ. I : 21 : 2.

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active step for the greater good, *viz.*, the well-being of the subjects.

When Mantharā brougnt the news of Rāma's coronation, Kaikeyī was at first overjoyed and gave Mantharā an ornament for bringing such welcome news. Then Mantharā began to pour poison into her ears, saying that Rāma's coronation meant Bharata's misfortune, to which Kaikeyī said: 'I do not see any difference between Rāma and Bharata.' Mantharā persists in her evil effort saying, 'Without doubt Rāma means harm to Bharata.'[7] At this Kaikeyī yields. The weak character breaks down at the prospect of her son's sufferings. She never once pauses to think whether Rāma, who was not different to her from Bharata, was likely to harm Bharata's interests.

This temptation episode has abiding validity precisely because initially Kaikeyī was not an evil character; her first reaction to the news of Rāma's coronation shows this. Then came the temptor, painting her attitude as injurious to her son's interest and she fell a prey to this appeal to her mother-love. The epics are full of implied condemnation for moral weaklings; they seem to suggest that it is not enough to be passively good because on the ethical level there is no such thing as passive goodness. One is continually pushed to make moral decisions and one's mettle is tested by these decisions. The gods do not fight man's battles; they assist man to fight them, provided man's initiative is in the right direction. A weak Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Daśaratha or a weak Kaikeyī is not pardoned, because life is too stern a business to connive at weakness. Such episodes underline the need for discrimination, judgement and courage to oppose the apparent reason of self-interest for the higher reason of truth and justice.

At the time of Rāma's coronation Daśaratha was faced with a choice: keeping a promise to his queen, thus denying justice to his innocent first born or acting justly by declaring that the promise itself was evil. For keeping the promise was but mechanistic. The principle of primogeniture was involved, but this has to be flouted in order to appease a perverse woman. But already Daśaratha is shown to be harbouring doubts

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7 Rāmastu bharate pāpam kuryāditi na samśayaḥ II : 7 : 30.

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regarding Bharata's integrity.[8] He says: 'Even though Bharata is a righteous man, obedient to his elders, virtuous, compassionate and self-controlled, still I think that man's mind is ever fickle.' Did Daśaratha have any basis for his suspicion? None whatever: this he argued to give Rāma reasons for crowning him in a hurry. Deep down in his heart he knew that Bharata was not a fickle or unrighteous person, that he would never go against Rāma. Hence Daśaratha's choice was really between obliging Kaikeyī by keeping his promise to her and ignoring her threats, and declaring that between the two, punishing the innocent Rāma was the greater evil which he could not commit. That would have meant unpopularity in some quarters, loss of peace and tranquillity in the palace. The king recoiled at the prospect and chose the path of least resistance, with the result the virtuous Kausalyā the mother of the regent, was punished, her rightful expectations dashed, and indirectly undeserved punishment on Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Urmilā was inflicted. We find the king coaxing and cajoling Kaikeyī on his knees but never coming out in indignation against the enormity of the moral evil. The signature on a blank sheet had to be honoured at the price of the king's duty of preserving justice and protecting the innocent. He faces his crisis like moral automation and pays for this act with his life. We find men committing such tragic errors every day; they evoke pity in us but not respect, just as Daśaratha their prototype remains a pitiful moral weakling to our mind.

Rāma found himself in a critical situation: clearly the king still intended to crown him, clearly Kaikeyī's stand was selfish and sinful. Rāma could point this out but he saw the King suffering moral agony. For Daśaratha the only way out of this apparent impasse was Rāma's banishment. Since the king found himself unable to uphold Rāma's claim to the throne, Rāma would not do so. The dice had already been cast, Rāma was already doomed to banishment when he was summoned before the king. There really was not much of choice, but what renders Rāma immortal in this episode is his attitude. He said that he would have gladly given his everything to Bharata without his

[8] Kamam Khalu satām vṛtte bhrātā te bharataḥ sthilaḥ. Jyeśṭhānuvartī dharmātmā sānukrośo jitendriyaḥ. Kim tu cittam manuṣyāṇām anityamiti me matam. II. 4: 26-7.

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asking[9], so great was his love for Bharata. Since by this act of his Daśaratha would be released from a vow, he offered to go immediately to the forest. This unhesitating assent shines all the more because of the sharp contrast of the situation. The night before he had purified himself ritually for assuming the duties of kingship. The morning, was to bring him great fulfilment. His mind was prepared for great glory and joy, pomp, splendour and jubilation in all the kingdom with him as the focal point. And then it thundered and his dreams were shattered. We are impressed with his unruffled equanimity. He was quite young, used to life of luxury, on the threshold of still greater luxury and pre-eminence, when he learns his fate, banishment for fourteen long years and the throne to go to Bharata. His reaction to this grave injustice, the humiliation, deprivation and the total blighting of prospects is rather unique. Like unflickering flame he left behind his bright future—with great calm and poise, without one regret, without once looking back on it, without a single sigh or tear.

There was a world of difference between Siddhārtha and Mahāvīra on the one hand and Rāma on the other; for, while the former two abdicated through a conviction of the futility of worldly enjoyments, even regarding them as evil, in Rāma's case there was no such motive. Rāma left the kingdom because he had to, and he did so without any self pity. What was later upheld at the true Karmayogin's attitude in the Vedanta or in the *Bhagavadgītā*—the unperturbed mental calm in the face of tumultuous upheavals of fortune—is here presented in the young prince. Since such catastrophes are bound to appear in life in some form or other, the validity of Rāma's reaction remains.

Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa had no obligation to follow Rāma; they offered to do so voluntarily. Lakṣmaṇa's first reaction was to redress the evil. The henpecked king must be forcibly restrained from carrying out his intention.[10] Prevented by Rāma from

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[9] Aham hi Sītām rājyam ca prāṇān iṣṭān dhanāni ca. Hṛṣṭo bhrātre svayam dadyām bharatāyāpracoditaḥ. II:16:33.

[10] Hanişye pitaram vṛddham kaikeyyāsktamānsam. Kṛpaṇam ca sthitam bālye vṛddhabhāvena garhitam. 11:23:19. also, Viklavo vīryahino yaḥ sa daivamanuvartate. II:23:16.

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acting on this impulse, Lakṣmaṇa takes the momentous decision of sharing the banishment, Sītā, too, refused to stay back in the palace. Without Rāma even heaven was not a good enough place for her.[11]

Bharata, on his return to Ayodhyā, encountered a crucial situation. His world had been sharply rent into two overnight. His own mother who had apparently exerted assiduously on his behalf was his worst enemy now. Though no fault of his own he found that his beloved brother Rāma, as well as Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, had paid most horrendously for kingship. Kaikeyī's mischief had started bearing fruit: Daśaratha had died of a broken heart, the three innocent people were already in the forest, Kausalyā, Sumitrā, Śatrughna were living in dejection—all this to give him a throne he had never coveted. But the throne was not his for the taking; it was rightfully his because the late king had given it to him. Without the slightest hesitation he dissociated himself from his mother's machination and firmly declared his intention to return it to the rightful owner, Rāma.

Rāma's magnanimity is shown when in the forest the news of Bharata's advance is brought to him by Lakṣmaṇa (who suspects Bharata of foul motives), he was annoyed with Lakṣmaṇa and said: 'If you speak thus out of greed for the kingdom, I shall talk to Bharata and he will give you the kingdom.'[12] Here Rāma actually defends his rival for whose sake he had been banished, because he did not yet know that Bharata was coming to beseech him to return to Ayodhyā. His deep faith in his brother remains unshaken even when the latter apparently prospers at this cost.

Rāma's decision not to return to Ayodhyā even after Bharata pleaded with him is further tested by Jābāli, a wise old sage who advocates repudiation of the promise to Daśaratha; he puts forward purely hedonistic reasons for breaking the vow. But Rāma is steadfast in his resolve. Finally Jābāli admits that he had been tempting Rāma.

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[11] Svarge pi ca vinā vāso bhavitā yadi Rāghava. Tvayā vinā naravyāghra nāham tadapi rocaye. II:27:21 also Yastvayā saha sa svargo nirayo yastvayā vinā. Iti jānan parām prītim gaccha Rāma mayā saha. II:30:19.

[12] Yadi rājyasya hetostvamimam vācam prabhaṣase. Vakṣyami bharatam dṛṣṭvā rājyamasamai pradīyatām. II:97:17.

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As early as the Āraṇyakāṇḍa, the other world, Laṅkā, comes closer to that of the forest-dwellers. Mārīca is sorely tried by Rāvaṇa but he courageously faces the monster-king and tries to persuade him to give up his evil designs on the virtuous Rāma and Sītā (III: 40-41). He says: 'You will find many who speak flattering words, but speakers of unpalatable truths are rather rare.'[13] When Rāvaṇa turns a deaf ear to his pleadings, he agrees to oblige him. He is an unwilling victim who knows that his own as well as that of his compatriots' doom is drawing near, but he is utterly powerless against the formidable might of Rāvaṇa.

The validity of this episode in the present day context is amply borne out in the fact that the powerful Bengali play *Mārīca-samvāda* uses Mārīca as symbol of the unwilling American recruits to the Vietnam war. The penalty for conscious moral acquiescence to evil is made palpable in the play where Mārīca is still found an adequate symbol for a contemporary situation.

When Rāvaṇa tempts Sītā the temptation has not much weight because Rāvaṇa can merely offer her a life of ease and comfort which she has voluntarily left behind for the love of her husband. She spurns his overtures in words of withering sneer and contempt. A little before she made the only blunder of her life: had suspected Lakṣmaṇa of entertaining lust for her. She knew Lakṣmaṇa better but in her anxiety and exasperation she said something which she knew would achieve the end. A few seconds later she paid heavily for this impatience.

Jaṭāyu who meets Rāvaṇa when, he was carrying away Sītā (III: 50-51) had the option of not interfering. He knew fully well that he had scant chances of prevailing against the mighty monster. Yet his integrity demanded that gesture which eventually cost him his life. The policy of non-interference sometimes leads to security but only at the cost of self-respect. The epic morality is an active morality; for each significant situation is open at two directions; the good become good because they can sacrifice the petty self-interest and security in the bigger interest of those in need. This sacrifice vindicates their manhood.

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[13] Sulabhāḥ puruṣā rājan satatam priyavādinaḥ. Apriyasya ca pathaysya vaktā śrotā ca durlabhaḥ. III:35:2 repeated by Vibhīṣaṇa in VI:16:21.

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Rāma's friendship with Sugrīva was primarily motivated by his need for friends who would help him recover Sītā and punish Rāvaṇa. But he could not accept this good turn without returning it in some way. Hence he had to help Sugrīva regain his lost kingdom from which he had been unjustly deprived and banished. Rāma stood behind a tree and shot at Vālin so that Vālin did not know of his presence while he was engaged in a fight with Sugrīva. This dastardly act was rightly condemned by Vālin who said to Rāma, 'People say that you are a virtuous and noble warrior, how will you defend this act among the righteous people?'[14] Rāma uses a lot of casuistry to justify his action. Vālin forgives him and dies.

Rāvaṇa had everything life can offer to man; not only pleasure but heroic achievements, manly qualities and even merits acquired through arduous 'Tapas'. Everything about Rāvaṇa has been drawn in gigantic proportions. Compared to him, Rāma may appear a mere pigmy. And yet Rāvaṇa's insatiable greed, lust and inordinate ambition bring about his downfall.

Śūrpaṇakhā tempts Rāvaṇa. She says, 'Your prestige will suffer if you cannot requite this evil done to me.' She also touches him at a more vulnerable spot viz. his vanity when she says that Sītā is too beautiful for the mere mortal Rāma, Rāvaṇa should possess her. Rāvaṇa's vanity is tickled and he immediately yields to the temptation. But it should be borne in mind that Śūrpaṇakhā is the only one who tempts Rāvaṇa to the evil path; all the rest counsel him to stay away from it or to redress the evil he has done. Mārīca (III: 35-41) Suka and Sārana (V: 35 : 36), Trijaṭā who dreams an ominous dream and warns him (V : 29), Kumbhakarṇa (V : 63), Mālyavant (V : 35-36), Aṅgada (V : 43), Saramā (V : 29 : 14-63) and Vibhīṣaṇa (V : 14-15), all give him good counsel, warn him against the impending ruin on the grounds of political and military expediency as well as on humanitarian grounds. But whom the gods destroy they first make mad, and Rāvaṇa's madness is the product of his boundless ego and colossal vanity.

We meet with such characters in life although they do not always meet their doom. In Rāvaṇa, however, the normal human

[14] Kim vakṣyasi satām madhye karma kṛtvā jugupsitam IV:17:15.

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expectation for moral retribution and poetic justice are fulfilled. He is the arch evil in the epic and we expect to see evil punished; so Rāvaṇa is destroyed.

Vibhīṣaṇa is the character who perhaps faces the worst ordeal in the epic. His advice to Rāvaṇa was prompted by a desire to prevent a national calamity. The refrain of his speech to Rāvaṇa was: 'Return Sītā to Rāma.'[15] What angered Rāvaṇa obviously was the reason Vibhīṣaṇa put forward for this step viz. Rāvaṇa cannot prevail against the superior prowess of Rāma. Rāvaṇa laughed his fear away as did Prahasta. Then Vibhīṣaṇa changed his argument and made the appeal on the moral ground saying that this step would save the country and people from the imminent disaster.[16] Indrajit, true heir of Rāvaṇa's heroism and vanity, made sarcastic remarks calling Vibhīṣaṇa as the only coward in their heroic line.[17] Vibhīṣaṇa upbraided him and reiterated his request to Rāvaṇa. 'Let us give Rāma treasures and wealth, precious clothes and jewels, let us take Sītā to him and live without grief and fear.[18] But Rāvaṇa is too drunk with flattery and vanity to listen; he replies with harsh words and sarcastic comments. Then, only when good counsel fails and Vibhīṣaṇa could hope for nothing better than insult from the haughty king, he takes the momentous decision. He condemns Rāvaṇa and bids good-bye to him saying: 'Peace be to you, I take my leave, be happy without me. You have no ear for my words which I speak out of concern for you, to prevent you (from this action). Men, when their time runs out and their span of life is over, reject their friends' advice.[19]

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[15] Pradīyatām Dāśarathāya Maithilī; refrain in his speech in V:14:3-4.

[16] Idam purasyāsya sarākṣasasya rājñā ca pathyam sasuhṛjjanasya. Samyag hi vākyam svamatam bravīmi narendraputrāya dadāma patnīmm V:14:21.

[17] Satvena vīryeṇa parākrameṇa śauryeṇa dhairyeṇa ca tejasā ca. Ekaḥ kule'smin puruṣaḥ vimukto Vibhīṣaṇastata kaniṣṭha-eṣaḥ. V:15:3.

[18] Dhanāni ratnāni vibhūṣaṇāni vāsāmsi divyāni maṇīmsca citrān. Sītām ca Rāmāya nivedya devīm vasema rājanniha vītaśokāḥ. V:15:16.

[19] Svasti te'stu gamiṣyāmi sukhī bhava mayā vinā. Nivāryamāṇasya mayā hitaiṣiṇā na rocate te vacanam niśācrara. Parītakāla hi gatāyuṣo narā hitam na grhṇanti suhṛdbhirīritam. V:16:27.

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At this point Vibhiṣaṇa's future was totally bleak; he burned his boats at Laṇkā where, from now on, he was looked upon as a traitor, and at Rāma's camp he could not hope of being taken for anything but a spy. It was an immensely difficult decision which promised no personal gain but rather threatened to ruin him totally. When he arrived at Rāma's camp he truthfully introduced himself and said that he had been insulted with cruel words and humiliated like a slave. He sought asylum with Rāma without any credentials. There was hostile reaction to him, as to a traitor, but Rāma firmly stood by his decision to welcome him.[20]

Vibhīṣaṇa was not a passive conscientious objector who merely withholds active support, he felt that Rāvaṇa's action called for redress and he put the sense of duty above family ties. Rāvaṇa's misdeed was not a personal sin bringing repercussion on an individual alone, it has far-reaching effects involving a country's fate. Hence he decided to help actively in ending the regime. Yet Vibhīṣaṇa was a loving kinsman. He refused to take an active part in slaying Indrajit, saying, 'Although I wish his death, tears fill my eyes, or I would lay aside my revulsion (and kill him).'[21] But regarding Rāvaṇa, who to him personified evil, he had no compunction; he even refused to perform the obsequial rites for him after his death. Rāma, true to the hero's code, persuaded him and said that man wars not with the dead; he even reminded him what a remarkably valiant hero Rāvaṇa had been.[22]

How often in the present day situations and political complexity, we are faced with the moral choice similar to Vibhīṣaṇa's when the option is between two apparently ignominious and dangerous courses. The criterion Vibhīṣaṇa brought to bear upon his decision was that of the greatest good of the greatest number. By coming over to the righteous side he was of immense help to expedite the outcome of the battle.

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[20] Sakṛdeva prapannāya tavāsmīti ca yācate. Abhayam sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmyetad vratam mama. V:11:33.

[21] Hantukāmasya me cakṣuścaiva nirudhyati. Ghṛnāmapāsya rāmārthe nihanyām bhrāturātmajam. Ayuktam nidhanam kartum purtrasya janitur mama. 17-18-V:89.

[22] Maraṇāntāni vairāṇi nivṛttam naḥ prayojanam. Kriyatāmasya samskāro mamāpyeṣa yathā tava. VI:109:25, also repeats the same in VI:111.

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Besides, this way alone could he live peacefully with his own conscience.

After the conclusion of the war Rāma ordered Sītā to be brought before him. People thronged to see her and the crowd had to be dispersed before she could proceed. Rāma scolded Vibhīṣana for controlling the crowd and ordered Sītā to approach on foot. He then told her that he had fought Rāvaṇa and rescued her not for her sake but to avenge the prestige of his own illustrious line. Since she was so beautiful Rāvaṇa could not have let her alone. Standing there before him she hurt his eyes like a lamp hurting a man with affected eyes. She could go anywhere she pleased, towards any of the ten quarters, he would have nothing to do with her. Rāvaṇa had looked her up with lustful eyes, he had just let her down from his arms; how could Rāma possibly take her back? That would tarnish his family's prestige. She was free to go to Lakṣmaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, Bharata or Śatrughna. (VI:34:13-16).

A few points in this passage demand special attention. Sītā had voluntarily chosen banishment out of her great love of her husband; she had been carried away by Rāvaṇa against her will; there in Laṅkā with no news of Rāma and no hope of reunion, she had firmly withstood the temptation to become the chief queen of an extremely rich and powerful king. For all this she was rewarded with insult and humiliation such as not even her worst enemy Rāvaṇa had dared to heap on her. She was not once asked if Rāvaṇa had really molested her; by a strange logic Rāma jumped to the conclusion that since she was beautiful Rāvaṇa must have enjoyed her, so he could not have her any more. Then came the unkindest cut of all: when Lakṣmaṇa took leave of his mother she had asked him to look upon Sītā as his mother; now Rāma included Lakṣmaṇa in the list of people she was to go to. The final verdict was uttered: she was forsaken. Why? For the sake of his family prestige. For this she was to be sacrificed, she too had forsaken a life of ease and comfort for him and had steadfastly spurned Rāvaṇa's overtures. She protested saying, 'That which is fully under my control, *viz.*, my heart, still belongs to you; what can I do with my body which I was powerless to protect? If you do not know me after all those years when I grew up at your side, then woe

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to me.'[23] After this appeal passed unheaded she entered the fire to prove her chastity.

As we have seen, the epics are our scriptures; we model our actions after Rāma's. Could we then wonder that millions of helpless Indian women live in utter misery, forsaken by their husbands? The marriage vows are the same for both the partners and yet society connives at the husband leaving the wife, while for obvious reasons she may not leave him.

Back in Ayodhyā when Rāma came to know of the subjects' disapproval of Sītā being accepted as the queen he immediately decided to banish her since the king was a demi-god to his subjects and they imitated his conduct.[24] Rāma has a double obligation, to give protection to his innocent wife and to set an example for the subjects. Ahalyā had recognized Indra even though he had come in her husband's disguise, yet her husband received her back after her penance for adultery was over (I:49). Surely the innocent Sītā could have been spared the second humiliation and banishment, for Rāma himself, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanuman had been eye-witnesses of her ordeal by fire and they could testify to this. Instead, Rāma sent her to the forest under the pretense of fulfilling her pregnancy-desire. When after many years of banishment she makes her final appearance at the royal court, she was asked to get another proof of her chastity. But now she was too bitter and disillusioned with life and male justice; so, instead of obliging the assembled courtiers she merely says: 'If I have not known any other man but Rāma in my thought, action and speech, may Mother Earth give me asylum.'[25] There appeared a chasm in the earth and she entered it. Thus did Rāma repay her life-long love, loyalty and attachment. Has the fate of women in India virtually altered in all these centuries? Are not the *Rāmāyaṇa* values still potent on this issue?

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[23] Madadhīnam tu yattan me hṛdayarn tvayi vartate. Parādhineṣu gātreṣu kim kariṣyāmyanīśvarī. Saha samvṛddhabhāvena samsargena ca mānada. Yadi te' ham na vijñātā hatā tenāsmi śāśvatam. VI:116-9-10.

[24] Asmākamapi dāreṣu sahanīyam bhaviṣyati. Yathā hi kurute rājā prajā tam anuvartate. VII:43:19.

[25] Manasā karmaṇā vācā yathā Rāmam samarcaye. Tathā me Mādhavī Devī vivaram dātumarhati. VII.

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Towards the close of the epic there is an episode of a Brahmin's son dying prematurely. As the superviser of the subjects' well-being Rāma set out to discover the cause. He found a Śūdra, Śambūka by name, practising stiff tapas. The man confessed that he was a Śūdra and immediately Rāma struck his head off, because a Śūdra may not practise penance. This is another evil which is still rampant in India. Even in the present day Harijans are burned to death, their villages are razed to the ground by the higher castes with complete impunity. The first example for such acts is found in the Śambūka-episode.

One element which makes the *Rāmāyaṇa* a fully adult literature is its equivocal situations. It is not the linear sort of medieval European heroic epic like the Kalevala, Gid, the Sagas or the Digenes Akrites. Here the moral choice itself is equivocal. In the episode of Rāma slaying Vālin, for example, the act is palpably unheroic and unjust and Vālin blames Rāma squarely for it. Then Rāma retorts saying that Vālin has been living with Rumā (Sugrīva's wife, which was wicked; he Rāma, as the king, had to punish the evil-doer in his territory. Also, men hunt animals from an ambush and what was Vālin but a monkey? Similarly, in Ahlayā's case she had recognized Indra, but then she had only admitted her husband, since Indra had approached her in his shape. The slaughter of Śambūka is cruel, but according to the current ethical code of the time it was Rāma's way to prevent untimely deaths. Expediency is brought in as a factor. There are two sides to these apparently condemnable acts. On a higher level of ethics they reveal the complexity of moral decisions in life without which the epic would have been puerile and artistically unsatisfactory. By presenting the extenuating çircumstances, by unfolding the inherent ambiguity of complex moral situations the appeal of the epic remains contemporary and it is possible to respond to it on a serious adult level.

In good and evil the epics set the model of conduct in each country. The moral values upheld in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are mostly noble and worthy or it would not be cherished by the millions through all these ages. Even minor characters like Guhaka offered unstinted help not only to Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā but also to Bharata; Viśvāmitra offered to sacrifice his own sons for the sake of Śunaḥśepha who had fled to him for refuge; Sugrīva

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left the pleasures or dalliance with his long lost wife in order to help Rāma find Sītā. Jaṭāyu laid down his own life in a bid to save Sītā. Vasiṣṭha put up with Viśvāmitra's provocations with singular equanimity. Even Viśvāmitra himself sends Triśanku to heaven by exhausting the accumulated merit of his own *tapas*.

Patience, forbearance, composure which still generally characterize the Indian are set up as worthy values in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Asceticism, detachment and renunciation too are upheld. The epic period is characterized by the emergence of several schools of asceticism, each with its own metaphysics but all sharing the common belief that detachment from the world of sense-objects is the first pre-condition of a truly moral life. From this follow other virtues as necessary corollaries—forgiveness, non-violence and kindness to all creatures.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as in the *Mahābhārata*, the life of the detached forest-dweller is romanticized into a long idyllic section. It is not depicted as privation for, it can be enjoyed if one has a mind attuned to nature which vibrates at beauty and is content to live in love and peace.

Ambition and violence are part of the heroic ideal and are not sinful in themselves until they lead man to other sins. Man's normal instincts demand legitimate satisfaction and fulfilment and it is not sinful to satisfy them. The metaphysics behind this epic ethic is that sin is the violation of social harmony. Whatever threatens the inner cohesion of the accepted hierarchy, whatever jeopardises the homogeneity of community life is sinful. Thus lust in man, unchastity in women, disrespect to elders and social superiors are sinful because society rests on the proper observance of these relationships. Above all, man is bound to cosmic harmony by the code of truth, hence vows and promises assume cosmic proportions.

Penance is of three kinds: (*a*) for the attainment of some desire, (*b*) to gain spiritual merit or (*c*) to expiate for some sin or remissness. Strangely enough, *tapas* does not necessarily purify or enrich a character as is evident in the case of Viśvāmitra. A great or good character on the other hand purifies those who come in contact with him. The supreme example is of course Rāma, whose touch or contact gave new vigour to

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Sampāti, new life to Śabarī and Ahalyā and sent Virādha and Danu to heaven.

The epic has its peculiar limitations and advantages. It has to be aesthetically acceptable. It was no set of dry tenets, like the scriptures, but tenets presented through human beings. So the epic character must look life-like. Thus in the *Rāmāyaṇa* there is not a single perfect flawless character, or any character which is wholly evil. Also we do not only see a few characters in critical moral situations, we also find sequences where we can contrast the motive of an act with its effect and draw our own conclusions regarding the desirability of a course of action. Thus Kaikeyī who strove to make her son happy set out to achieve her end through a blatantly wrong course. Her objective was honour, pleasure and glory for Bharata, dishonour for Kausalyā and Rāma, the position of the first lady of the kingdom for herself. But she failed to gain any of these. Public sympathy remained with Rāma and Kausalyā and then with Bharata after he had dissociated himself from his mother's machinations. Calumny and blame were her portion; her own son called her a monster.[26]

Observation of these sequences brings moral lessons in the most palatable and attractive form, also most effectively, for they come through narrative and poetry. But such sequences also reveal the inevitable realization of the epic authors that virtue is its own reward. In an age when belief in punishment and reward of sin and virtue being carried on through successive births was very common, we find Sītā—who was no other than a goodness in essence—passing through a series of sufferings. Even Rāma, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, has a large measure of grief; Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa who are all partial incarnations of Viṣṇu, are not spared. Evidently, the religious and metaphysical beliefs are inadequate, not co-extensive with experience. They are not really tenable in the complexity of human experience and it is to the eternal credit of the epic authors that they never even attempted to square belief with the varied human experience.

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[26] Na tvamaśvapateḥ Kanyā dharamarājasya dhīmataḥ. Rākṣasī tatra jātāsi kulapradhavamsinī pituḥ. II : 74 : 9.

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Even on the human level the good suffer while sometimes the wicked prosper. The impact of this apparently anomalous and morally incongruous reality on the sensitive mind is deep and abiding. We see that the greatness or goodness of man is determined in proportion to his capacity to suffer, and his response to suffering. While the weak and inferior character collapses and is totally crushed under the weight of grief, the morally powerful man bears it manfully and walks on the crest of the waves of his grief. Happiness on the mundane level is for the lesser figures in the epic, in the truly great characters there is that mysterious capacity to subordinate the purely personal interest to an ideal, a creed or a cause. By making this clear through characters who live and shine through the choices they make at the time of a moral crises, the *Rāmāyaṇa* conveys the highest moral value, *viz.*, the proper attitude to suffering in life. And this eloquent message is ageless; it remains even in our troubled times when suffering has assumed many different forms but remains unchanged in content.

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RĀMĀYAṆA MANUSCRIPTS OF DIFFERENT VERSIONS

By **U. P. SHAH**

The Oriental Institute, M.S. University of Baroda, undertook in 1951 to prepare a Critical Edition of *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*. In the initial stages, as preliminary but fundamental work, "a list of about 2,500 *Rāmāyaṇa* Manuscripts was prepared with the help of all available printed Catalogues, etc., and the information so obtained was systematically entered on three kinds of cards specially prepared for the purpose, namely, (1) Text, (2) Text and Commentary and (3) Commentary alone, as already noted by the late Prof. G. H. Bhatt, the first General Editor of this Critical Edition. It was impossible to go through all the MSS. whose cards were prepared, but a selection could be made.

The Oriental Institute had in all 50 MSS. which were examined. Out of these there were 32 of text only. It may be remembered that all the MSS. of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, or of other Catalogues, were not complete with all kāṇḍas. The Oriental Institute had 31 MSS. in Devanagari script, 14 in Grantha, 1 in Telugu, 3 in Nandinagari containing text only. Besides there were 3 in Devanagari, 3 in Grantha and 3 in Telugu with Text and some commentary. 9 Grantha MSS. and 1 Devanagari had commentary alone.

Our appeal for loan of MSS. and for lists of *Rāmāyaṇa* MSS. of those collections whose lists were not published, met with good response from all quarters and several selected manuscripts or their transcripts or microfilms or photocopies were made available for collation, from India and abroad. About one hundred and fifty MSS. of different versions were obtained on loan from various institutions and about fifty more from collections of various individuals.

From these, in the initial stage, 86 MSS. were selected for collation of the Bālakāṇḍa and after study, some MSS. were dropped from different versions in cases where there were more than one MS. of practically the same family and or had no special noteworthy features. Ultimately 37 MSS. were utilized

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for the critical edition of the Bālakāṇḍa, 29 for Ayodhyā, 29 for Āraṇya, 32 for Kiṣkindhā, 29 for Sundara, 34 for Yuddha, and 41 for the Uttara, out of several more collated.

Prof. G. H. Bhatt had personally visited Nepal and examined 60 MSS. in Newari and Maithili scripts. Of all the known manuscripts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, the oldest dated MS. so far known, is a palmleaf MS. in Newari script, dated in V.S. 1076 (A.D. 1020), preserved in the Bir Library (No. 934), Kathmandu. It is a complete manuscript containing all the kāṇḍas with continuous pagination, but while the Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa ends on f. 376a containing only one line, the Sundarakāṇḍa, begins on f. 377a. In this whole codex, only one post-colophon entry, giving the date etc., occurs at the end of the Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa. This entry shows that it was copied in Samvat 1076 by one Kāyastha Pandit Gopati, residing at Pataka, for Bhāṇḍaśālika Ānanda of Nepāla-desa, when Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Gāngayadeva was ruling over Tirabhuktī. Who copied the remaining kāṇḍas is not known, nor do we know when they were copied. Our analysis has shown that the manuscript belongs to the Northern Recension of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and that it is more allied to the North-Western than to the North-Eastern version of the Northern Recension.

Another Newari MS., No. 905 of the Bir Library, dated in Newari Samvat 795 (=1675 A.D.), is also used for the Critical Edition. It generally agrees with the NE version.

It would be worthwhile checking some more Newari MSS. with the Critical Apparatus of our edition, especially, from another big collection of Nepal, namely, the Sundara Bag Palace collection, which was then not available for inspection and which, I understand, is now opened to scholars.

Of the Maithili Version, the Critical Edition used in all 13 MSS. out of which there were eight MSS. from Darbhanga, Palace Library collection. Of these V_1 used for Bālakāṇḍa is the oldest dated MS. in Maithili script, dated in Lakṣmaṇa Samvat 241 = 1360 A.D. This manuscript, like the other three manuscripts of the Maithili version, follows the NE recension, and gave important readings. V_2 used for Bālakāṇḍa is dated in Saka year 1473 = A.D. 1541.

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Of the Bengali version, our B_1 which is MS. 348 of Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, dated in Śaka 1610 = 1688 A.D. is the same as MS. G. used by Gorresio in his edition which gives the NE. recension of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Of the Southern Recension, we have three principal versions—Telugu, Grantha and Malayalam. For the Telugu version we used three manuscripts out of which our T_3 (of Uttara) appeared to follow the NE. recension while the two other Telugu Manuscripts follow the S. recension. Our T_1 from Adyar, containing all kāṇḍas, is undated but appears to be at least 500 years old.

Of the Grantha version, G_1 from Oriental Institute collection, has all the kāṇḍas, and is dated in Kollam 993 (1818 A.D.). G_2 from Trippunithura, Maharaja's Grantha Library, also contains all the seven kāṇḍas and is about 300 years old. Both G_3 from Government Oriental MSS. Library, Madras and G_4 of our Bālakāṇḍa from Muni Punyavijayaji's collections, Ahmedabad, contain all the seven kāṇḍas and both are about 500 years old.

Of the Malayalam version, we used on an average four manuscripts for the first six kāṇḍas and ten manuscripts for the last kāṇḍa. M_1 of the Bālakāṇḍa contained Ayodhyākāṇḍa also and is dated in Kollam 687 (1512 A.D.). M_2, complete in seven kāṇḍas, from Trippunithura, is dated in Kollam 865 (1690 A.D.).

While editing the Critical text of the Uttarakāṇḍa, a curious situation arose when in certain cases, in the first twenty-five sargas, it was found that our collated MSS. of the southern rcension. started showing disagreement with the Gujarati Press ed. (Vulgate) and the Kumbhakonam ed., both of which represented the Southern recension. It was ultimately suspected that some different tradition of the SR. existed and a further investigation of Malayalam manuscripts disclosed the existence of an earlier text tradition in our M_9 which was then recently acquired for the Institute, and M_8 borrowed specially from the Kerala University manuscript Library. M_9 is dated in Kollam 591 (1416 A.D.). M_8 is dated in Kollam 1001 (1826 A.D.), M_{10} in Kollam 688 (1513 A.D.). A post-colophon entry of M_8 said that the text of that MS. represented the text adopted by Udāri Varadarāja in his Commentary, "Which, as Prof. Rāghavan

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showed, was composed in early twelfth century A.D. The M_8 contained the text only of the Uttarakāṇḍa. Two more Malayalam MSS. representing this earlier tradition were also collated.

It is interesting to note that there are some old MSS. of different kāṇḍas existing in various collections in Kerala, but since, this was found out at a very late stage when, our edition of the other kāṇḍas were already published, it was impossible to collate them and utilize them. It would not be surprising if a similar earlier tradition is also found existing in the Grantha version.

The Devanagari manuscripts represent composite versions. Some of our manuscripts follow NW., other NE, other S. recension, while the evidence of a few so far studied, strongly indicate the existence of a W. version of the Northern recension.

Regarding the different MSS, of different versions of the Rāmāyaṇa which have been used for the Critical apparatus of the seven kāṇḍas, you may refer to the Introductions to the different kāṇḍas of the above Critical Edition, where they are set forth in a classified manner.

As remarked by the editor of the Critical text of the Sundara-kāṇḍa in his Introduction p. xxiii, "two MS.—T_2 and T_3—reveal significant affinity with the MS. of the N. recension. T_3 shows not infrequently variants which are common to one or more MSS. of the N. recension." The editor notes deviations of T_2 from text tradition of S., *e.g.*, an appendix passage No. 10 exclusive to itself, and nine exclusive star passages, and writes: "More important is the fact that T_2 discloses positive agreement with MSS. of N. recension in passages which are not found in any other MSS. of S. Recension." In matter of variants T_2 seems to go more frequently with N. than with S.

It may be noted the T_3 mostly follows N. recension, at least in the Uttarakāṇḍa as noted by its editor.

Writing on T_3 the editor of Sundarakāṇḍa adds the following significant remarks: "This codex, therefore, while retaining its basic character as a Southern codex, does provide an indication, which other S. MSS. too, more or less, support

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that the S. recension is not a closed recension in the sense that it has not altogether resisted additions or modifications without sacrificing the unity of its text tradition."

Prof. Bhatt writes: "In the constitution of the text, the principle of agreement rightly plays an important part (*cf.* Sukthankar, Prolegomena, p. 114 ff.). But the agreement between B for instance, and M_4 can hardly have any value on account of the Northern leaning of M_4. Agreement presupposes two *independent* Versions. M_4 is not independent of any Version of the Northern Recension. The agreement between a Northern Version and M_4 is, therefore, ignored in the constitution of the text of the Rāmāyaṇa."

The MS. referred to as M_3 in Ayodhyā, which Dr. P. L. Vaidya. simply calls MS., a MS. of S. Recension, shows agreement with NR. in several cases.

The Palm-leaf MS. of Ayodhyā in Malayalam characters from Nilakanthan Nambudripad of Chemangad in Kerala, is not dated. It seems to be at least 400 years old. Besides Ayodhyā, the MS. contains Araṇya. The whole MS. is in one hand.

According to Dr. P. L. Vaidya, the editor of the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, the MS. M_4 "represents generally the S. recension, but shows considerable influence of the N. recension as well." Remarking on the pretty large number of exclusive star passages (30) in this MS., Dr. Vaidya writes, "this feature of a number of exclusive star-passages in M_4 indicates that *it is not only a mixed codex but most probably* a representative of another version." According to him, M_4 "in some respects exhibits characteristics of a mixed version, sharing characteristics of Newari and Bengali versions as well as those of the S. recension, having at the same time a number of exclusive insertions not found in either recension. *It should be borne in mind, however, that this MS. can not be called a mixed codex, as it has a large number of exclusive star-passages. I would rather call it a sub-version of Malayalam* (*Introduction to Ayodhyā, p. XX*).

About this MS. Dr. Vaidya again says (Introduction p. xxi); "*Whether it belongs to an older version or is a mixed codex is a perplexing question.*" He ultimately calls it "*a new version*" (Intro. p. xxi).

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Two very interesting cases of readings of this M_4 of Ayodhyā must be brought to the notice of scholars for further research.

In the star-passage 2241, Critical Edition of Ayodhyā, p. 576, sarga 100, after 16, we have a long insertion mostly from S. MSS. and S_1, which is supposed to include a veiled reference to Buddhism in the lines *yathā hi coraḥ sa tathā hi buddhastathāgatam nāstika-matra viddhi.* Now this M_4 reads *Yathāli* for Yathā hi and *tathāgatā nāstikamantrasiddhih* for *tathāgatam nāstikamatra viddhi.* The whole passage, not supported by most of N is obviously a later interpolation but what is interesting to note is that M_4 from Malabar agreeing often with N. seems to retain an older *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition contaminated by S. at some later stage which must precede the final stabilization of text in S. during the age of commentators like Govindarāja and others.

Another interesting case to bear in mind is from Ayodhyā, Critical Edition, sarga 8, v. 5, p. 45. The famous verse is: *hrstah khalu bhavisvanti Rāmasya paramāḥ striyaḥ/aprahṛṣṭāh bhaviṣyanti snusūs te Bharata-kṣaye/5/* Now this is retained as Critical text, but we have S_t N_2 V_1 BD_6 and M_4 substituting the following for the above verse: *Ṛddhiyuktā śriyā juṣṭā Rāmapatnī bhaviṣyati/aśrīmatī tvanṛddhā ca snuṣā tava bhaviṣyati/.* This stands to reason. And I believe here N and M_4 have retained a genuine older tradition.

The object in pointing out these two cases is this. With M_4 of Bālakāṇḍa agreeing largely with N and again M_4 of Ayodhyā doing the same (though having its own exclusive passages) it should have been taken as an indicator of the fact that an earlier text tradition existed in S., at least in the M. version, agreeing with N. which, if properly explored, would, as in the case of the MBH, give us a better text with N. agreeing with Kerala. If more manuscripts of this type for different kāṇḍas come to light, then such manuscripts should have the value of an independent version agreeing with one or more versions of NR.

Ths MS. referred to as M_3 in Critical Edition of Āraṇya-kāṇḍa has only five exclusive inserted star-passages and one star-passage as substitute.

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In a post-colophon entry at the end of Yuddhakāṇḍa from the Kerala University collection we are told that the text of this MS. is the text which Varadarāja of Uḍāli-kula edited and commented upon. It is especially said that Varadarāja had edited the text after considering various readings. At the end of Yuddha, after this we read *Rāmāyaṇam samāptam.*

It may be noted that in manuscript D_1 (Devanagari Western Version), in the Bālakāṇḍa, *colophons at the end of sargas bear the terms "Ayodhyākāṇḍe" instead of "Bālakāṇḍe"*; sargas 1-52 are of Bālakāṇḍa while sargas 55-177 are of Ayodhyākāṇḍa. As stated by the editor of Ayodhyākāṇḍa, "after sarga 175 (*i.e.*, after Vulgate sarga 115 and Critical Edition 107), two new sargas (176-177) containing the episode of Rāmapādukābhiṣeka by Bharata, which is not found in any other MS., are added, followed by *phalaśruti* stanzas (App. I No. 30 of Critical edition of Ayodhyā)."

Regarding the MS. referred to as D_2 in Ayodhyā and as D_1 in Āraṇya; *In his Introduction to Āraṇya, Prof. Bhatt changes his earlier view and assigns this to NW version.* Referred to as D_1 in Kiṣkindhā and assigned by Prof, Mankad (Editor) to *Western Version.* Referred to as D_1 *in Sundara, as W. Version* and as D_1 *in Yuddha, NW version,* and as D^1 *W. Version. in Uttara.*

In D_3 also the colophons have "Ayodhākāṇḍe" for "Bālakāṇḍe" under sargas of Bālakāṇḍa.

In D_3 the first sarga of Kiṣkindhā appears at the end of Āraṇya as its part. It is referred to as D_3 W. version in Sundara. Critical Edition sargas 1-15 of Yuddhakāṇḍa appear at the end of Sundara as the latter's integral part. It is referred to as D_5 W. version, in Yuddhakāṇḍa and in Uttarakāṇḍa.

The problem of a Devanagari W. version has been discussed by Prof. Bhatt in his Introductions to the Bāla and Araṇya kāṇḍas, by Prof. D. R. Mankad in his Introduction to Kiṣkindhā, by Prof. Jhala in his Introduction to Sundara, and by the present writer in his Introduction to Uttara. The arguments advanced by the above editors show that there is a strong indication of the existence of a Western Devanagari version, Devanagari being the script used in Western Indian medieval and modern manuscripts.

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It may be remembered that Prof. Bhatt rejected his earlier view in favouring a W. version in his Introduction to Araṇyakāṇḍa and Dr. P. L. Vaidya continued his belief in a W. version in his Critical edition of Yuddhakāṇḍa.

This version is interesting in several respects. Especially noteworthy is the fact that three manuscripts speak of Bālakāṇḍa as Ayodhyākāṇḍa in the colophons at the end of sargas of Bālakāṇḍa.

Sometimes one or more versions retain some interesting reading which may be the most reasonable one. I would like to point out here an interesting case, first pointed out by Shri Raikrishnadas. Bālakāṇḍa, Critical Edition, sarga 1 verse 65 cd read:—

समुद्रवचनाच्चैव नलं सेतुमकारयत् ॥

Now, MS. D_{10} D_{13} and M_4 of Bālakāṇḍa read नलसेतुमकारयत् while S_1 N V B D_1-3.5.7.9-13 read राघवस्य च (or तु or हि) for समुद्र. This would suggest that possibly the episode of समुद्र appearing was a later addition and that the नलसेतु, a smaller bridge or a causeway was later taken as a सेतु built by नल. Rai Krishnadasji further pointed out that in Bala, Critical Edition, sarga 3, 24 again the word used is a compound, नलसेतोश्च दर्शनम्। He compares the word नल-माल or सुप्पारक जातक for his interpretation of the above meaning of नलसेतु. I may add here one more interesting reference from Yuddhakāṇḍa (Critical Edition), 111.10 where Rāma points out to Sītā:

एष सेतुर्मया बद्धः सागरे सलिलार्णवे ।
तव हेतोर्विशालाक्षि नलसेतुः सुदृष्करः ॥

Interpretations of this nature are the concern of higher criticism. But another interesting case may be pointed out how manuscript evidence suggests certain things otherwise even though an editor cannot omit the particular verse, line, passage or an incident.

In Āraṇya (Critical Edition), 45, 19, we find Sītā telling Rāvaṇa :

समाश्वस मुहूर्तं तु शक्यं वस्तुमिह त्वया।
आगमिष्यति मे भर्ता वन्यमादाय पुष्कलम् ॥ 16 ॥

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and then Dg_1 (in margin), Dt_1, Dm_1, D_4, D_6, T and G_1 insert :

रूरुन्गोधान्वराहांश्च हत्वादायामिषं बहु ।

Now even if we discard the line of *881 we cannot discard verse 19b which says वन्यामादाय पुष्कलम् । Rāma had gone to bring the golden deer only and not many kills. Does it mean that the original fact of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa having gone to forest for hunting and bringing food and not for killing the golden deer remained in one line in 19b and then this line with its meaning was eclipsed by the incident of the golden deer?

In the constitution of the text of a critical edition, the agreement between two independent versions plays an important part. But one comes across manuscripts written in any one particular script but not representing the version of that script. Thus, for example, Prof. Bhatt has noted a MS. of Ayodhyākāṇḍa in the Maithilī script from Raj Library, Darbhanga, which was found to represent, not the North-Eastern division of the Northern recension, but was found to agree with our Vulgate or the Southern Recension. M_4 of Bālakāṇḍa from Chemangad, Sri Nilakantha Nambudripad's collections, did not represent a true Malayalam version or the S. recension as such but was, according Prof. Bhatt, a misch-codex leaning much mere towards NR than towards the SR. The T_3 of our Uttarakāṇḍa represented almost fully the NE tradition and only rarely the SR.

Those acquainted with the history of text transmission in India realise very well that in India, the different versions have formed according to scripts of the different regions since the scribe of every region selects, for his *ādarśa* or exemplar codex, the manuscript written in his own regional script with which he is thoroughly acquainted. In this way are formed versions like the Maithili, the Bengali, the Śāradā, the Grantha, the Malayālam, etc.

Now these versions are broadly grouped under the two main recensions—namely, the Northern and the Southern. Agreement between any two independent versions, one or more from North with one or more from the South makes it highly probable that the text is fairly old and genuine.

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If all the manuscripts of any one version omit a passage or a verse it is a case for relegating the passage or verse to appendix or star passage in footnotes, rather than to the reconstructed text, and the passage or verse is often a later insertion, especially if such an omission gets support of one or more MSS. of one or more other version or versions. Working on a similar principle, Bulcke showed on comparison of the three different editions of NE (Gorresio's ed.), NW (Hoshiarpur ed.) and S (Bombay and Kumbhakonam editions), the passages which are obviously later editions. But with collations of selected manuscripts of each version, this task for critical editions of *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as *Mahābhārata* became much more easy. Thus the date of birth and the reference to signs of Zodiacs at the time of birth of Rāma found only in Southern versions is a Southern insertion. Similarly, a careful analysis of all the appendix passages of our Critical edition will show how different recensions and versions have contributed to the addition of different episodes and descriptions, etc., to the original text.

So far as the *Rāmāyaṇa* Critical Edition is concerned, I believe that a further search of M version MSS. representing earlier tradition, and agreeing with N. for the different kāṇḍas, would be necessary and fruitful. We could not do this as we came to know of this at a very late stage, *i.e.*, while editing the Uttarakāṇḍa. In fact M_4 of Bāla and M_4 of Ayodhyā could have suggested this possibility.

Another thing to bear in mind is that a codex containing all the seven kāṇḍas written in a single hand, selected for collation, should be used in the Critical Edition of all the seven kāṇḍas, and not for a few kāṇḍas only.

I am personally of opinion that in giving Nos. like B_1, G_1, T_3, V_2, M_4, D_{10}, etc., of different manuscripts of different versions, the number given once in any kāṇḍa to any one MS. should not be given again to any other MS. in any other kāṇḍa. We have not only to form an impression about the MS. for a particular kāṇḍa, but also for the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a whole so far as that particular MS. is concerned. This scheme also has its own drawback, but I would prefer to try it.

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THE MIGRATION OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA STORY TO INDONESIA and SOME PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE STRUCTURE and CONTENTS OF THE OLD JAVANESE RĀMĀYAṆA

By HIMANSU BHUSAN SARKAR

I

The growth of the story in India

In the present paper, I shall briefly describe the genesis of the story in India and then study the story of its migration to Indonesia, where it flowered into wonderful shape, which, like its counterpart in Indonesian art and sculpture, partook of some novel features unknown to India or South-East Asia. It is well-known that the origin of the Rāma-saga goes back to pre-christian centuries and some of the names of the *Rām*, such as Ikṣvāku, Daśaratha and Rāma can be traced even to the Ṛgveda The present Sanskrit (Skt) *Rām* embodies some pre-Buddhistic features as well. H. P. Sastri[1] had drawn our attention to the fact that Śrāvasti, Rājagṛha and Kauśāmbī are well-known towns in the time of Buddha, but we hear of their foundation in the *Rām*. It seems that the embryoric stage of the story is reflected in the *Daśaratha Jātaka*[2], which was probably adapted from an earlier rudimentary Rāma-saga.[3] It appears in some form in the iconography of the pre-christian Sanchi and Bharhut stūpas.[4] This version does not, of course, refer to the southern *rākṣasas* and Sītā appears here as the daughter of king Daśaratha. The non-mention of southern topics does not, of course, prove anything, as the *Jātaka*-stories were framed only with limited

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[1] *Descr. Cat. Skt. Mss.*, Vol. v, Purāṇas, the Rāmāyaṇa.

[2] Fusboll, *The Jātaka* iv, pp. 123—130 (no. 461).

[3] Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature.*, vol. I. p. 508 ff.

[4] The bulk of the sculptures of these stūpas may be ascribed to the second and first century B.C.

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objectives and had no compulsive motive to narrate the whole story, but by the third century A.D., the story had assumed its present features, because, in a Chinese collection of some *Jātaka*-stories[5], which were translated by a Sogdiana-monk between A.D. 222 and 280, the episodes of Rāma's exile, the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the duel of the latter with Jaṭāyu, of Sugrīva with Vālin, the construction of a bridge to Laṅkā, the ordeal of Sītā, etc., have been drawn in outline. It is usually assured that the present *Rām* took shape between B.C. 400 and A.D. 200. Indeed, public recitation of the *Rām* is already referred to in the Buddhist text *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* written towards the close of the second century A.D. On the occasions of great religious festivals, dramas based upon the story or episodes based thereon, were also staged before the public and this helped the people to mould their life accordingly. Besides, as the *caturvargas, i.e., dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa,* were embedded in the text itself, its *phalaśruti* vouched salvation in after-life. Hence, it was very often recited, praying for divine intervention on critical occasions of life, namely serious illness in the family, falling fortunes and other calamities, as well as on the occasion of great religious festivities, including funeral rites, etc. The same thing has happened in Indonesia,

II

The migration of the story

The earliest available trace regarding the migration of the Rāma-saga to South-East Asia is perhaps provided by the Chinese annals of the Liang Dynasty (502-56) which state that, in the 14th year of the T'ien-Chien period (A.D. 515), prince P'o-ch-ich-ta-lo (possibly Bhagadatta)[6] of the kingdom of Lang-ya or Lang-ya-hsu, also called Laṅgkāsuka, sent an envoy named A-ch'e-to to present a memorial to the Chinese emperor. The memorialist stated[7], among other things, that ".....the

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[5] Regarding the Chinese Buddhist versions of the Rāma saga in the *Daśaratha Jātaka*, vide Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

[6] Vide Pelliot in *Journ.* As., IV (1914) pp. 390-91, 398 and 402; also Ferrand in *Ibid* XII (1918) p. 140, note 1.

[7] Vide Groeneveldt: Notes on the *Malaya Archipelago and Malacca,* etc., p. 11.

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precious skt. is generally known in his land. The walls and palaces of his imposing cities are high, lofty as the Mountain Gandhamādana." That skt. was known at least among the Brahmin literate of the Malayan royal courts[8] is not only attested by other Chinese texts as well, but also by the discovery of several skt. inscriptions ranging from the 4th to the 8th century A.D. Regarding the name of the kingdom, its earliest variant (7th century) is Lang-ya (-hsiu[9]). Krom had placed this state in the island of Sumatra[10], but Wheatley has convincingly proved that the place lay in the Malay peninsula.[11] The prevalence of skt., the name of the place as Lang-ya and the reference to Mt. Gandhamādana occurring simultaneously in the same context would lead one to believe that the name Lang-ya was designated after the celebrated Laṅkā of Vālmīki's *Rām* and that the Gandhamādana refers to the famous Mountain which was uprooted by Hanumān to carry medicinal herbs to Laṅkā to preserve, the life of Lakṣmaṇa, in his fight against Indrajit.

The kingdom of Lang-ya had also a port and it was a halting station for ships plying between India and China. The merchant vessels of those days had to wait in such ports for the arrival of suitable monsoons[12] for their onward journey to India or China. The idle months had therefore to be passed in those port-areas in the congenial company of a sizeable Indianized community in diverse sorts of recreations, including Indian music and dancing, to which clear references have been made in early Chinese texts. All these details lead one to the belief that some form of the Rāma-saga was known to the Indianized community of at least some Malayan states in the beginning of the sixth century A.D. Although we cannot definitely say that any text of the *Rām* was recited or staged there, it is a very reasonable assumption.

It may also be recalled in this connexion that a record of Kambuja dating from the sixth century tells us that a copy of

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[8] H. B. Sarkar, *Some contributions of India to the ancient Civilisation of Indonesia and Malaysia,* pp. 27-37.

[9] P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese table, on* p. 266.

[10] *Hindoe-Jav. Geschiedenis,* p. 68.

[11] P. Wheately, *op. cit.,* pp. 253-67.

[12] I-sing (Tr. Takakusu), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion,* etc. pp. xxiv-v, P. Wheatley, *Op. cit.,* pp. XXX ff.

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the *Rām*, a complete copy of the *Mah*, as well as a copy of an unnamed *Purāṇa* were recited daily before the deity Tribhuvaneśvara[13] and a 7th century Campa inscription mentions a temple in which the image of Vālmīki was installed.[14] It is inconceivable that these sacred epics of India could have been transmitted to Campā and Kambuja, by-passing entirely the coastal Malayan states, particularly the port-towns of Kampong etc. where favourable conditions existed for the circulation of the Rāma-story.

III

The Indonesian phase of the story

If we can catch a faint glimpse of the currency of the Rāma-saga in Malaya in the 6th century A.D., we are completely in the dark regarding its prevalence in Java or Sumatra for the next few centuries, unless the Buddhistic centre of learning in the Śrī-vijayan capital at Palembang included, like those at Nalanda, Vikramasila, Valabhi, etc., the studies of Brahmanical texts, including the Skt. epics. In the neighbouring island of Java, no proof exists about the study of the Indian epics in the 7th or 8th century A.D.[15]

Inscriptional data on *Rām* however start coming to our aid from the 8th century onwards. The first reference occurs in the inscription of king Sañjaya dated in A.D. 732[16], which compares the *digvijaya* (*i.e.*, conquest of all quarters) of king Sañjaya with that of Raghu, whose exploits were popularised by Kālidāsa in his Raghuvaṁśa. Subsequent inscriptions present persons who were witnesses at the foundation of freeholds in

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[13] Barth and Bergaigne, *Inscriptions Sanscrites du Cambodge*, 28 and R.C. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Kambuja*, no. 13.

[14] *BEFEO*. XXVIII, p. 149.

[15] The temples of the Dieng plateau in Central Java associated with the names of some *Mahābhārata* heroes, such as Puntadeva (Yudhiṣṭhira), Bīma (Bhīma), Arjuna, etc. are believed by many scholars to have been dedicated to these heroes in the 19th century. As it is not possible to be certain about this the question must remain an open one. Vide B. Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, p. 32. For plates of the temples vide *Ibid.*, pl. nos, 25, 26-27, 29 and Frederic, *The Art of South-East Asia*. p. 153.

[16] H. B. Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java I*, no. 3, V. 11.

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various places of Central Java, as having names identical with some of the celebrated figures of the *Rām*, such as Rāvaṇa[17], Laṅgkā[18], Pavana[19], Ayuddha as the name of a person,[20] Bharata[21], Rāma[22], Lāghava (Rāghava)[23], Rāmāyaṇa[24], Aja[25], Sītā[26], Sagara[27], Vāli[28] and Lakṣmaṇa.[29]

A study of these names are instructive in as much as they show that the names of the main figures of the epic were already known in Central Java between A.D. 824 and 928. As these names first occur in the pre-Laṅkā Kāṇḍa section of the *Rām* and none of the important figures from the later part of the *Rām*, such as Vibhīṣaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Indrajit, Mandodarī, occur there, one may perhaps postulate that at least the episodes included in the earlier kāṇḍas of the *Rām* were known in Central Java in the 9th century.

Of these references, the most important one refers to the recitation of the *Rām*, which deserves to be quoted in full. The Old-Javanese inscription in question pertains to the reign of king Balitung who promulgated the edict in A.D. 907. It describes the foundation of certain freeholds, with their attendant privileges, and records the giving of confirmation-money, etc., to the witnesses. After the curse-formula was uttered by the *sang makudur* against future transgressors of the freehold, the participants were befittingly entertained. Towards the end occurs the reference to the recitation of an Old-Javanese text on the Ram. The text of the inscription is translated below:

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17 *Ibid.*, no. 9, v. 9-10 dated 743 Śaka; 10.B. 28 dated 746 Śaka; 40. a. 17 dated 801 Śaka.

18 *Ibid.* no. 25. 21. dated 784 Śaka.

19 It is the name of the Wind-God who was Hanumān's father vide *Ibid.*, no. 40 *b.* 5 dated 801 Śaka; 86. II. 1, dated 841 Śaka; 87. 20 dated during the reign of King Dakṣa (A.D. 915).

20 *Ibid.* no 40 a. 14. dated 901 Śaka; no. 41. 6. 2 dated 801 Śaka.

21 *Ibid.* no. 40. *b.* 5 dated 801 Śaka; no. 56. 10. dated 813 Śaka.

22 *Ibid.* no. 46. 5 dated 801 (?) Śaka.

23 *Ibid.* no. 70 A. 17 dated 829 Śaka.

24 *Ibid.* no. 72, 10 dated 829 Śaka.

25 *Ibid.* no. 70 A. 25 dated 329 Śaka and no. 87. (A.D. 915).

26 *Ibid.* no. 80. 18 dated 104 Sañjaya (832 Śaka).

27 *Ibid.* no. 94. A. 12 dated 8 (49) Śaka.

28 *Ibid.* no. 96. 4 dated 850 Śaka.

29 *Ibid.* no. 96, 15 dated 860 Śaka., 105, 6 (undated).

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".....Si Nalu recited the Bhīmakumāra, dancing like Kīcaka; Si Jaluk recited the *Rāmāyaṇa*, blowing flutes and making buffoonry; Si Mungmuk (and) Si Galiki showed *wayang* in honour of gods and presented (above all) Bhīmajakumāra." This is the first inscriptional evidence bearing on the currency of some sort of text on certain episodes of the *Rām* and the *Mah.* The reference to Bhīmajakumāra or Bhīmakumāra perhaps concerns some episodes bearing on Ghatotkaca who supplied many interesting themes for the Javanese *wayang* shows.

The researches of many Asian and European scholars like Kern, Juynboll, Stutterheim, Aichole, Goris, Poerbatjaraka, Berg, Ghosh, Bulcke, Hooykaas and some others have considerably enlarged the range of our knowledge of the old-Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* (*OJR*) in both extent and depth. We know now, for example, that the earlier portions of the *OJR* are based upon the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* (*Bhk*). This is indeed a major gain, but many gaps in our knowledge still persist, the want of details in the inscription of A.D. 907 or the question whether the composition of the *OJR* was undertaken during the Central Javanese period, i.e. within A.D. 928. Poerbatjaraka propounded the view[30] with a wealth of linguistic and other details that the *OJR* was composed in the first few decades of the 10th century. We may readily agree with Poerbatjaraka and other scholars that the *OJR* betrays archaic peculiarities which cannot be later than A.D. 978.[31] There is however one point which cannot perhaps be adequately answered, namely, the extent of borrowing by the author of the *OJR* from an earlier Old-Javanese text or texts on the Rāma-saga. One such text seems to be referred to in the charter of 907. I do not know if it would be repaying to study all the archaisms of the *OJR* and see if the cantos where they occur can be linked up to present the facade of a story of episodal or other nature. One version of the Rāma-saga seems to have been recited by Mr. Jaluk at the foundation-ceremony of the freehold on the 4th of May, 907, as referred to above, and it was a one-man performance. In any case, it seems to be a fact that the *OJR* betrays archaisms percolating from older times and

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[30] *Tijdschr. Bat. Genoot.* 72 (1932) pp. 151—214.

[31] *Ibid.*, Brandes in *Beschr. Condi Singasari* (1909) p. 14; *Bijdr. Kon. Inst.* 82 (1926), pp. 181-82.

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regarding certain text-portion of the *OJR* (Canto xxv). Professor C. Hooykaas says that it "actually conforms to the oldest type of Javanese poetry and is perhaps the oldest section of the *OJR*.[32] If we accept this view, it would appear that the *OJR* was improved upon a text of older times which contained the archaisms and older materials embedded in Canto XXV and perhaps else-where. The problems of disentangling different layers of the *OJR* are of so complex character that it is very difficult to arrive at a consensus. It may be recalled in this connexion that scholarship of the highest order was devoted to the discovery of interpolation of the *OJR*, but the comparison of the *Bhk* with the *OJR* has indicated in recent years the untenability of the story of interpolation in some major respects.[33] There is therefore justification to be cautious, lest the theory of so many layers in the *OJR* do not substantially meet a similar fate.

How shaky the position would be may appear from a re-examination of some of the views of Poerbatjaraka in certain parts of his paper in the *TBG* referred to above. Regarding the five archaic peculiarities of the *OJR* listed by him, namely (a) that the *hiaat* conforms to the practice in the older inscriptions, (*b*) that the use of the word *anakbi* for 'woman' is valid till the time of Sindok, (c) that the frequent use of *u* for *i* in such words as *pangguh* and *lungguh* for *panggih* and *linggih* is pre-Airlanggian, (*d*) that the rural officers like *rama marata* and *mageman* appear only in older inscriptions and lastly, (*e*) that the designations of the high dignitaries have almost literal similarity, with those of the time of Balitung, we may ask: Are these peculiarities enough to anchor the *OJR* to Balitung-Sindok's age? Even if we admit the validity of nos (*a*), (*b*) and (*d*) we may still argue that no. (c) presents cases of local dialectical variations. Besides, the very admission of Poerbatjaraka that the linguistic peculiarities of *u* for *i* are pre-Airlanggian brings us to at least A.D. 1019, when Airlangga

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[32] C. Hooykaas, *The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* (VKNAW, Lett, N.S. 65 No. 1) p. 68.

[33] C. Hooykaas, *The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa* Kakavin (VKI, XVI), p. 10 ff. with literature cited therein and the same author's *The Old-Jav. Rāmāyaṇa*, p. 62 ff. with lit. cited therein.

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ascended on the throne of East Java. This is about one century after the time of king Balitung (898-910). The last point deserves more attention than it has received at the hands of Poerbatjaraka. Poerbatjaraka has found almost literal similarity in the designations of the nigh dignitaries of the time with those recorded in the *OJR*. This point is hardly convincing for two main considerations: (i) no exhaustive study of the Old-Jav. inscriptions of Central and Eastern Java vis-a-vis the *OJR* has been made till now to make out a convincing case that such common terms do not occur later than the first half of the 10th century A.D. The cases of *Rāma marata* and *mageman* may be readily admitted, but what about others? (ii) secondly, if it is believed that the *OJR* has utilised earlier text(s); whether written in prose or poetry, what is the guarantee that these terms or designations do not belong to the heritage from the earlier text(s), now lost ?

I have also to refer to one or two other matters discussed in the same paper by Poerbatjaraka. He has tried to show (pp. 154 ff) that the order of sitting of king Rāvaṇa in his audience-hall with the *patih* and other *patihs,* five in number, in a row, according to rank, indicates a cabinet of six, of whom one was the prime minister. He has drawn parallels from inscriptions and has quoted in this connexion the inscription of Kembang Arum, elited by Dr. Bosch in *OV*, 1925, p. 46. This inscription was not however a royal charter and if, in spite of this, one considers the first group of recipients of confirmation-gifts, beginning with the *Rakryan mapatih of Hino,* namely, Pu Daksa Rahubajrapratipaksaksaya, as the prime minister, the number of cabinet ministers would come to 7. If we now examine a royal charter of the time of Balitung, namely the plate of Telang II, dated 825 Saka, the number of such principal officers will be 13, that of the same king in the copper-plates of Mantyasih I, dated 829 Śaka, will be no. 10. The inscriptions from the time of king Sindok to that of Airlangga are however confusing to a certain extent in regard to priority of ranks, except in the case of first two or three cases, and do not therefore yield any satisfactory result. On the other hand, the core of the saptotpatti of latter times, discussed in details by Dr. Var. Naerssen in *BKI*

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90 (1933), pp. 239 ff., presents a body of five principal Śaiva officers, with one chief, who seem better to conform to the Five plus One of the *OJR:* Its compatibility, of course, requires further probe. But even when everything has been said, one cannot guarantee that these elements are not imaginary or that they have not been handed down from an earlier model and used by the author of the *OJR*. The use of krama or krama inggil in the *OJR* or similarity of description of certain architectural forms occurring in that work with planning and arrangement of the Candi Sevu or Loro Jonggrang temple complex seems to me to be entirely misleading and beside the point, as such elements can only prove, even apart from other difficulties, just the antiquity of these references, but do not certainly prove the contemporaneity of the *OJR* with them. If a similar phenomenon, for example, is observed in the case of the *Nāgarakratagāma,* would that prove the contemporaneity of that text with temple-complexes referred to above?

Once we admit that the archaisms of the *OJR* have really come from an earlier text and doubts arise about the identity of the older and younger sections of the poem, it would be extremely difficult to arive at a consensus about fixing the norm for the disentagling of different layers. It is always very hazardous to fix the date of a poem, within a couple of decades or so, execlusively on linguistic basis. Perhaps one may be permitted to take a fresh note of the view of Kern[34] that in spite of some obsolete grammatical peculiarities, the book is far younger than the old-Javanese *Ādiparva*, the *Arjunavivāha* and the *Bhāratayuddha* though far older than the *Sutasoma* and the the *Bhomakāvya.* The critical study of these texts in recent years would not countenance the view of Kern in so pronounced a way, but a later date for the text should not be entirely ruled out. We may discuss other considerations also.

It is true that there was at least one shorter poem previous to the time of the *OJR*.[35] Its chief value lies in its being the forerunner of the *Kakavins* of later days. It may not appear arbitrary if we put the formative period of Old-Javanese literature between C. 800 and C. 950 A.D.—a period of 150

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[34] *Rāmāyaṇa Oudjavaansch Heldendicht,* Introduction.

[35] J. G. de Casparis, *Selected Inscriptions from the 7th to the 9th Century A.D. Vol II.*

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years, within which period only three texts are believed to have been composed, but none of them is comparable to the range and grandear of the *OJR*. 'This was apparently the period of increasingly deeper acquaintance with Skt. language and literature, which the Skt. and Old-Jav. inscriptions, as well as the three texts referred to above, seem to attest. The fragments of Indo-Javanese grammatica as well as lexicography and exercises in Indo-Indonesian translation works[36] of this period are of a rudimentary character, nor are the three texts provisionally assigned to this period are much to enthuse over.

The Old Jav. inscriptions of Central Java starting from A.D. 809 and ending in 928 do not contain many Skt. words, excepting at the almost stereotyped preamble, nor do they reveal any accelerated pace of growth of Old-Java. language. If we leave aside the usual preamble and the stereotyped curse formula of the Old-Jav. inscriptions which also become fuller with the passage of time, the later inscriptions would not be such as can be placed in juxtaposition to the majesty of the *OJR*. The *OJR*, with its full-fledged paraphernalia of Skt. rhetoric, prosody and other techniques of Skt. *alaṁkāra*, in addition to its rich native vocabulary, would demand a structural and technical growth which could hardly have been present in the first or second quarter of the 10th century A.D. No text of the type of *Vṛttasañcaya* or *Vṛttāyana* is known to have been current in Java in the beginning of the 10th century. The question naturally arises: how long a period are we to assign for the growth of a fuller rich vocabulary represented in the glossarium on the *OJR* by Dr. Juynboll? A comparison of new words emerging in the vocabulary of the *Moh texts* written during the reign of king Dharmavamśa with those of the *Arjunavivāha*, of the reign of king Airlingga, could have probably indicated the expansion of the linguistic base of the *OJR*. Would not at least 100 years be required, after the shifting of the political and cultural centre of gravity from Central Java to East Java and its settlement there, to allow the efflorescence of the language in the *OJR*? This would bring us to the second quarter of the llth century A.D. We wish now to revert to the

[36] J. Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, pp. 104-106

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corrupt texts of the *Vavatekam*[37] and the *Prastutining*[38] *Kakavin* which have incorporated some traditions regarding the authorship of the *OJR* and some other important Old. Jav. texts. Except the names of texts and their authors, not much reliance can be placed on these two works although some of the dates seem to be accidentally confirmed, for instance, that of the *Bhāratayuddha* and perhaps that of the *Sumanasāntaka* as well.[39] Other dates, where inscriptional evidence is available, are found to be wrong or where these are not available appear to be of questionable character. Even after admitting these limitations, one cannot get rid of the idea why the date of the most outstanding work of Old-Javanese literature, as given in or processed out from the *Vavatekam* and the *Prastutining Kakavin,* shall be absolutely wrong? One can however admit that it would be arbitrary to admit some dates and cancel others. It is therefore fair to admit that this type of dubious evidence can only be utilised as of supporting nature, to justify the conclusion, tentative or firm, arrived at from other independent sources.

From the question of date of the *OJR,* let us now revert to other points of the same text, particularly its religious complexion, which has also interesting features. The hero of all the *Rāmāyaṇa* recensions is Rāma, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, while Rāvaṇa is depicted as an adherent of Śiva. The two deities are thus placed in juxtaposition, but they are perfectly generous to each other, because in Canto XXIV, 119-202, Śiva himself reminds Rāma that he is no other than Viṣṇu. From the 49th stanza in the last Canto of the *OJR,* Dr. Juynboll came to the conclusion that the author of this text was a Śaiva. This view is strengthened by the fact that in Canto I, stanzas 7 & 26, Daśaratha has been presented as patron of Śiva. When Rāvaṇa came to abduct Sītā, he appeared in the guise of a Śaiva monk

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[37] H. H. Juynboll, *Supplement II* (1911), cod. 4672; N. J. Krom, while discussing the dates of some Old Jav. texts in *Tijdschr. Bat. Gen.* 57 (1916) pp. 508-21.

[38] H. H. Juynboll, *op. cit.* (1911), p, 286.

[39] The author of the *Sumanasāntaka* speaks of king Varṣajaya in Canto 183 and the king might be his patron. The last date of the predecessor of king Jayavarṣa Digjaya Sastraprabhu is not known, but the earliest one of Śrī Jayavarṣa, who is usually identified with Śrī Varṣajaya, is 1104, thus there is a difference of six years only.

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of the Tantrik school; he again prays, in Canto 23, in a Śiva-temple for his success in the final struggle against Rāma. More details have been furnished by Poerbatjaraka in *Tijd. Bat. Genoot* 72 (1932), pp. 169-171.

Regarding Yogīśvara as the author of the *OJR*, there is a controversy which has not yet entirely died out. For one thing, some scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity of Cantos XXV and XXVI, but Poerbajaraka upheld XXVI, 1-3, 7-10, 17-52, thus the end where the name of Yogīśvara occurs in stanza 51. Those who have expressed doubts seem to believe that certain portion of the last two cantos being "amateurish "are not worth the pen of the author of the *OJR*, but may revert to a second poet of inferior calibre. It is very difficult to be dogmatic about such views, because, even admitting for argument's sake that some parts of cantos 25 and 26 are not of the same standard as other parts of the text, which Hooykaas has denied, it cannot be expected that in a long poem like the *OJR* the author would be able to maintain an even tempo and standard in all places. Besides, there may be various reasons we do not know of, e.g., sickness, old age or other infirmities which might have impaired his faculties in maintaining the even tempo of his earlier years. This is not to deny that archaism revealed in certain portions of the *OJR* do not revert to the first layer of the *OJR*, which Yogīśvara retained to give it a halo of sanctity or for other reasons we do not know of. In this connexion, Hooykaas has drawn our attention to certain remarks of Prof. Berg, "With Berg I won't rule out the possibility that the O-J. Sanskritist who composed the first half of the *OJR* died before he had completed his task, but I'm afraid that hitherto I have failed to detect proofs or even indications of a different hand."[40]

Dr. Hooykaas has further observed[41] "The assumption that was the poet of the *OJR* has been a persistent mistake in Old-Javanology. It is amazing that the Balinese so misinterpreted XXVI, 50, the penultimate stanza of the poem, second of the colophon. "I do not know if we can be so dogmatic about the name of the author of the *OJR*. It may be agreed that *Y* was not perhaps the proper name of the author of the *OJR*. I veered

[40] C. Hooykaas, *The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa*, p. 70 p.s. (fn.).
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

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round to this view after reading several Old-Jav. texts, including *Brḥaspatitattva*[42], the *Rājapatiguṇḍala*[43], and some others. "In the former text, the person who has attained the highest *Siddhi* has been called a Yogīśvara, while the latter text says that persons of such description "undertake incense-burning and prays for the welfare of all and for the permanency of the kingdom of His Majesty." The author of the *Rām* might have been one such Yogīśvara.

The way in which the Canto XXVI, 50-52 has been written has all the outword marks of the many sacred texts of India, which describe, towards the end, not only the name of the author, but also the *Phalaśruti* of reading and hearing such religious texts. The last portion of Canto XXVI, therefore, falls into the set Indian pattern. According to Balinese tradition, the author of the *OJR* was named Rājakusuma or Kusumavicitra, but Prof. Kern[44] has doubted the veracity of the tradition, as there is no independent testimony to confirm it. Similarly, since there is nothing to deny it either, we should keep an open mind in the matter. We do not know however if this problem would, at all be solved in future, as an Indonesian changes his name on important occasions of his life.

It has now been proved that the first 56% of the *OJR* and the first *x* 65% of the *Bhaṭṭi-Kāvya* run closely parallel, and it is the only Old-Jav. *Kakavin,* of which we know the origin with absolute certainty.[45] Regarding the remaining portion of the *OJR,* it has been noticed further that from then onward the same epic-story is told, but the differences become so great that "comparison has no longer the force of proof: the poet of the *OJR* went his own way." The author of the *Bhk* who wrote in his conluding stanza that it was composed in Valabhi is believed to have flourished not earlier than the 6th century, A.D. or later

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[42] Ed. Sudarshana Devi, *Wrhaspati Tattva,* p. 48.

[43] Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century* (Text in vol. I and trans. in vol. III)

[44] *Verhand. Bat. Genoot,* XXII, no. II, p. 12 and Kern, Verspr. Ges. IX, pp. 70-71.

[45] H. B, Sarkar, *Ind. Influences* etc. p. 180; M. Ghosh in *Journ. Greater Ind. Soc.* III, (1936), pp. 113-7 and works of C.C. Berg, C. Hooykaas, Bulcke and others.

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than the middle of the 7th.[46] The scope of the work of *Bhk*, with its 22 Cantos, is co-eval with that of the *OJR* with its 26 Cantos. They handle the entire story of the *Rām* beginning with the reign of king Daśaratha, king of Ayodhyā, who was childless, but who got four sons as a result of propitiatory rites performed by the sage Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. The story is webbed further in the usual way till the return of Rāma-Sītā from Laṅkā and coronation of Rāma amidst universal rejoicings.

The objectives of the two texts seem however to have been quite different. The professed aim of *Bhk* was to teach Skt. grammatical rules and rhetoric through a familiar subject, but these being out of question in an Old-Javanese Kakavin, the poet of the *OJR* seems deliberately to have taken upon himself the task of using the text for the illustration of Skt. rhetoric and prosody, which were the common meeting ground for both the texts—a view also shared by Hooykaas and some others. The author has demonstrated his considerable knowledge of Skt. as well as his skill in the employment of Skt. metres and embellishments. In a text of 26 polymetric Cantos distributed over 2774 stanzas, the poet has used 81 different metres, of which not more than 8% was usually executed in one metre, the metrical changes being some 268.[47] In regard to Skt. alaṁkāra or embellishment, the poet has used with remarkable skill Skt. *anuprāsa, yamaka, utprekṣā, upamā, apanhuti, rūpaka,* etc.[48] as well as other features of Skt. poetics like *mādhurya, bhāvikatva,* etc., as demonstrated by Hooykaas. We cannot however be certain if this skill was attained in India, which is not unlikely or in one of the several centres of learning in Suvarṇadvīpa itself, where there was arrangement for learning Skt. as well as Brahmanical texts and where scholars like I-tsing (688-95) and Atīśa Dipāṅkara (1013-1025)[49] had studied for long years and wherefrom bundles of Skt. texts were despatched to China as late as 1017.[50] The centre where the author of the *OJR* learnt

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[46] Hultzsch in *ZDMG*, LXXII (1908), p. 145 ff.

[47] C. Hooykaas in *VKI. op. cit.*, p. 37.

[48] Aichele in *Orient. Lit. Zeit.*, 29, pp. 933-9; Djawa II (1931); Hooykaas, *The Old-Javanese Rāmṇyaāa, passim.*

[49] I-Tsing, *op. cit.*, p. xl. and A. Chattopadhyaya, *Atisa and Tibet*, pp. 84-85.

[50] K. A. N. Sastri, *History of Śrivijaya*, p. 79.

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Skt. language and literature is however a point which can never be determined satisfactorily.

From the concordance of the *OJR* with Vālmīki's *Rām* and the *Bhk*[51]? it may be seen that many passages in the *Bhk* have been condensed in the *OJR*, while better narration, addition of details and amplification occur in many others. It has also been noticed that the *OJR* and the *Bhk* run parallel, canto by canto, up to the 5th; thereafter they deviate, but catch up again at the 7th Sarga, which trend continues up to the 9th canto, again deviating in the 10th, after which the gap widens, till the concordance with the *Bhk* disappears after the middle section of the 16th Sarga. The deviations noted in the Canto-divisions of the parallel portions of the *OJR* and the *Bhk* may be due to the author or a later redactor or faulty copying.

Apart from the structure of the *OJR*, Dr. Hooykaas has further discussed with a wealth of details[52] the form and contents of the *OJR* from the viewpoint of Skt. poetics, but there are still some uncharted fields of investigation where researches need be directed. One such field refers to the task of comparing the sequel of the Rāma-story after Canto XV of the *OJR* with relevent portions of the *Raghuvaṁśa* (*RVS*) of Kālidāsa (C.A.D. 400), the *Setubandha* of Pravarasena[53] (6th century) and *Jānakīharaṇa* (*JH*) of Kumāradāsa (C. 775-C. 825).[54] Of these three texts, the first two were studied in ancient Kambuja and V. Raghavan says[55], "Kālidāsa and his two poems *Kumārasambhava* and *Raghuvaṁśa* are seen at almost every step" in the inscriptions of Kambuja. Pravarasena's *Setubandha* has also been explicitly referred to in a Kambujan inscription of

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51 *VKI* 16 (1955), p. 30-34 and Appendix II.

52 *The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa.*

53 Ed. Sivadatta and Parab, N.S.P., Bombay, 1895. The text was composed in 15 cantos, but these are written in Prākṛta and were "Obviously modelled on the highly artificial Skt. Kāvya." Vide Dasgupta and De, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* I., p. 119.

54 Ed' V. M. Vyāsa, with text and Hindi translation (1966). Vide in this connection Dasgupta and De, *op. cit.,* p. 185 ff.

55 Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, vol. IV, p. 48.

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the time of King Yaśovarman I (A.D. 889—C. 900).[56] It is therefore evident that the *RVS* and the *Setubandha,* which deal with the Rāma Saga, were studied in Kambuja towards the end of the 9th century A.D. and might have been current in Java as well during that time.

The *Setubandha* of Pravarasena is a Prākrt-text in 15 Cantos, modelled on Skt. artificial style, but its relevance to the study of the problems of the *OJR* may not be great, but for the sake of a comprehensive study of the *OJR* this text may not be entirely lost sight of. Regarding other Skt. poems, the desirability of a comprehensive comparative study is almost compelling for various reasons, of which some are noted below.

It may be recalled that certain episodes handled in the *RVS,* such as the story of Aja and Indumati, have been narrated in 180 Cantos of the Kakavin *Sumanasāntaka*[57], while the opening scenes with Viṣṇu in *anantaśayana*-posture, depicted on the relief penels of the Loro Jonggrang temple-complex are, according to Vogel[58], similar to those handled in the *RVS.* More striking is the fact that Hemādri, a good interpreter of Kālidāsa, has pointed out in his annotation of the 16th Canto of the *RVS* that the principal source of the poem from Cantos 9 to 15 was derived from the Skt. *Rām,* while the remaining portions of the text were based on "other traditions." It is exactly here, in the central part of the 16th Canto of the *OJR,* that this Kakavin strikes a different course, like Kālidāsa's *RVS.* It is necessary therefore to compare deviations of the *Bhk, OJR* and the *RVS* in one comprehensive survey, as all the deviations occur at a particular point of the 16th Canto and the phenomenon may not be quite accidental.

Apart from these three texts, there was also the well-known Skt. poem called *Jānakīharaṇa* (*JH*) which closely followed Kālidāsa's *RVS* and *Kumārasambhava,* sometimes even "plagiarising his predecessor's ideas, sometimes even in phrases. "The time when Kumāradāsa flourished is not definitely known[59], but he had become famous by the 10th century A.D.,

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[56] Barth and Bergaigne, *Inscriptions Sanskrites de Campa et du Cambodge,* no. LVII and R. C. Majumder, *Inscriptions of Kambuja,* no. 63.

[57] H. B. Sarkar, *Indian Influences* etc. p. 224 ff. with lit. cited therein.

[58] In *Bijdr. Kon. Just.* 77 (1921), p. 202 ff.

[59] Vide Dasgupta and De, *op. cit,,* p. 185 ff.

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as his work has been referred to in the *Kāvyamīmāmsā* of Rājaśekhara. As all these poets flourished before the author of the *OJR* composed his work, the later portions of the *OJR* may therefore be profitably studied from the viewpoint of a comparative study of the source materials. This need becomes all the greater on account of certain other striking phenomena. These refer to the division of Cantos in the *JH* and the *OJR*. The full Skt. text of the *JH* has now become available, we know that the *JH* contained 20 Cantos, ending with the coronation on the return of Rāma and Sītā to Ayodhyā. This brings out the surprising phenomena that *Bhk*, the *OJR* and possibly also the *JH* bring the story of the *Rām.* up to the coronation of Rāma and Sītā at Ayodhyā, but whereas the *Bhk* ended with Canto XXII, the *JH* ended with XXth Canto, the *OJR* ended with the Canto XXVI. This stretching of the cantos in the *OJR* emphasises the needed to examine, on the one hand, the mutual relationship of Cantos I—XVI of the *RVS, Bhk, OJR* and the *JH* and of succeeding portions of the same texts, to trace, if possible, the "other sources" referred to by Hemādri. Professor Hooykaas has no doubt published excellent studies on the *OJR*, particularly from the viewpoint of Skt. *chhandas* and *alaṁkāra*. He has presented us with a concordance of Vālmīki's *Rām, Bhk* and *OJR* as regards their content-materials. No textual comparison on the basis of actual language used in the Skt. and the Old-Jav. poem has yet been made. This has become necessary to find out if the condensed passages, better narration, addition of details or amplification, to which Hooykaas has drawn our attention in his studies on the *Rām*[60], refer to the *RVS*, the *JH* or Vālmīki's *Rām.*

Some remarks are now called for regarding the first and the last Kāṇḍas of Vālmīki's *Rām.* It might have been observed that the *Bhk* and the *OJR* both end with the Yuddhakāṇḍa of the *Rām.* The reunion of Rāma and Sītā, after the fire-ordeal in Canto XXIV, is followed by story of the aerial journey in Canto XXV in which Rāma was in reminiscent mood. The last Canto recounts the arrival of the party in Ayodhyā, where royal festivities continued for a week, ending on the 10th day of the lunar month. The traditions preserved in the *Bhk* and the *OJR*

[60] In VKI (XVI), pp. 31 ff.

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are thus distinctly different from those of Vālmīki's *Rām,* which ends with the disappearance of Sītā in the Nether world. If we eliminate the stories of the Bālakāṇḍa and also the Uttarakāṇḍa from Vālmīki'a *Rām*, it would appear that the *OJR* does not much differ from the Skt. traditions of India. But in other places, the differences are certainly very significant. The *OJR* does not handle the long episodes of the Bālakāṇḍa; the elaborate stories of olden times told by sage Viśvāmitra to young Rāma in the Skt. epic are also absent in the *OJR.* It is noteworthy in this context that the *Rāmāyaṇa* reliefs of Loro Jonggrang, constructed in the beginning of the 10th century A.D.[61] rarely notice any scene from the Bālakāṇḍa.[62] This might, of course, be due to the fact that it was impossible on the part of the Loro Jonggrang sculptors to bring in all the major episodes of the Bālakāṇḍa for want of space. The damaged panels as far as available in the Loro Jonggrang complex also indicate some phases of the Yuddhakāṇḍa, including the death of Rāvaṇa[63], but they present nothing from the Uttarakāṇḍa of Vālmīki's *Rām.* So neither the *OJR* nor traditions preserved in the Loro Jonggrang panels present any theme from the Skt. Uttarakāṇḍa.[64]

It is not therefore surprising that the Old-Jav. Uttarakāṇḍa is a separate work, which is essentially a free translation of the Skt. text. There are no doubt some scattered Skt. ślokas in this text, but these have been too much corrupted.[65] Van der Tu observed long ago that these corrupt verses have some similarity with those of the Telugu recension, but differs from the eastern recension of Gorresio. It is not possible to make any further comment without a detailed study of the relevant texts, which study has not yet been made. A MS of the Uttarakāṇḍa (cod. no. 5031) ends with "Iti Rāmāyaṇa Uttarakāṇḍa praktam Parisamapta."

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[61] B. Kempers, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[62] This is not connect; Panels 1-9 depict some of the major episodes of the Bālakāṇḍa. See the section on these sculptures in my 'Rāmāyaṇa in Greater India' (1975), pp. 100-1, *V.R.*

[63] B. Kempers, *Ibid.* p. 62 and pl. 160.

[64] But see my 'Rāmāyaṇa in Greater India', p. 103.

[65] *Kawi—Bal. Ned. Wdb.* I (1897), p. 187.

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The Indo-Javanese period of Indonesian history, which saw the efflorescence of the Rāma Saga in ancient art and literature, wrote its epitaph in the old literature style in *OJO* XCIII, dated A.D. 1486, which speaks of Bhaṭāra Rāma sarvapavitra (i.e. God Rāma is All-Holy), while *OJO* XCIV, dated about the same time, exalts the installation of (the image of) the auspicious God Rāma. But when these inscriptions were composed, Islam was almost knocking at the door, but that is a different story.

The above-mentioned pages must have indicated, in bare outline, the complex nature of the problems of the *OJR*, to which I am perhaps adding some more. The discovery of the source of the *OJR*, which began with my stumbling upon some identical passage of the *Bhk* and the *OJR* more than 40 years back, and researches subsequent thereto, for which we are particularly grateful to Dr. Hooykaas, have now given us wider perspective and this has to be further explored.

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THE MALAYSIAN RĀMĀYAṆA IN PERFORMANCE

By **AMIN SWEENEY**

The *Rāmāyaṇa* has captivated the inhabitants of South-East Asia for centuries and has been written, recited, sculpted and performed from Cambodia to Bali. In Malay culture, the Rāmāyaṇa tradition has been kept alive by only three of these media, for sculptures and reliefs (if they ever existed) have not survived the passage of time.

Before concentrating our attention on the Malaysian *Rāmāyaṇa* in performance, let us first attempt to place our subject of discussion in its context by taking a brief look at the Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition in broad outline. Nothing comparable to the poetry of Yogīśvara's Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa kakawin* survives in Malay. The Rāma Saga is, however, well-known in Malay and exists in both literary and oral forms, the latter still enjoying considerable popularity in the north of West Malaysia, where they form the basic repertoire of the Malay shadow-play. The literary Malay version, the *Hikayat Seri Rāma,* is interrelated with a group of popular Javanese versions. These popular tales differ considerably from the version of Vālmīki, and this was thought by some scholars, notably Rassers (1922), to be due to Indonesian influence. It seems clear that Rassers devoted his attention only to Vālmīki's version, yet numerous other versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been current in India from early times, and Father Camille Bulcke (1950) compares three hundred versions in Sanskrit and various vernaculars. Rassers' view was shown to be unacceptable by Stutterheim (1925) and to a greater extent by Zieseniss (1928) who pointed to Indian sources for nearly the whole of the Malay Rāma Saga. Zieseniss concluded that the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* represents a popular form of the Rāma Saga which reached Indonesia from various parts of India between the 13th and 17th centuries and was there fused into a more or less complete whole.

In the studies of Stutterheim and Zieseniss, however, only two main texts of the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* formed the basis for

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comparison. Examination of the Raffles Malay, MS. 22 of the Royal Asiatic Society, London reveals, however, that the version contained therein is largely a combination of the two versions employed by Zieseniss, and in many places is much fuller and fills many of the gaps left in the previous two texts. Comparison of this MS. with the Thai Rāma Saga, the *Rāmakien,* reveals that much more of the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* resembles the *Rāmakien* (and consequently the Khmer version, which shows much similarity to the *Rāmakien,* and which judging from the bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat, is the elder version) than is apparent from the version of the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* (henceforth: *HSR*) as presented by Zieseniss.[1]

As stated above, the *HSR* has much in common with the popular Javanese recensions of the saga as found in the *serat kandas*[2] and the *Rāma Keling,* and it is clear that the popular Rāma sagas of South-East Asia fall into a distinct group. This conclusion in no way negates the findings of Zieseniss and, although a large number of the motifs found in the Raffles version of the *HSR* are not dealt with by Zieseniss, there is as yet no evidence to show that these motifs are not Indian in origin.[3] Rather, the evidence seems to suggest that the popular versions of South-East Asia (thus not merely Malay and Javanese) originate, to a greater or lesser extent, from the same streams of oral tradition flowing from India.

Study of the Malay *HSR* reveals few non-Indian motifs. There is, however, one interesting feature: Islamic influence. Barrett (1963) makes plausible the idea that the *HSR* is not merely given Islamic colouring to ensure its survival in a Muslim society, but that a deliberate attempt is made to remould the story on Islamic lines, so that the tale is depicted as unfolding during the time of the prophet Adam, and indeed Adam takes the place of Pitāmaha in the *HSR*.

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1 For a detailed discussion of the subject, see Sweeney, 1972 and 1973a.

2 A few of these Javanese *Serat Kanda* versions of the Rāma saga have been translated/adapted into Malay. One such work (Mackenzie 64, India Office 3539) was recently edited by a student of mine; Janaki Padmanabhan *Cerita Seri Rāma,* Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1975 (unpublished).

3 It will be possible to draw solid conclusions on the spread of *Rāmāyaṇa* motifs only when a motif-index of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been produced.

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The oral versions of the Malay Rāma saga exist primarily as shadow-play tales and secondarily as stories of the *penglipur lara* (professional story-teller).[4] It is not realistic to attempt to distinguish between the performing and oral traditions, because (*a*) the dramatic versions are transmitted almost entirely orally (the majority of performers being illiterate or semi-literate) and (*b*) the presentation of the story-teller contains a number of dramatic elements.[5] In this paper, therefore, although our focus will be primarily upon the shadow-play versions, we shall nevertheless devote some attention to the other oral form in passing.

I understand that this seminar will be more concerned with the Rāmāyaṇa repertoire than with its dramatic vehicle, in this case, the shadow-play. I shall therefore confine myself here to a few brief comments on this genre. Nevertheless, I feel it is undesirable that this repertoire study should be uprooted from its context and treated entirely as a literary text. When dealing with Malay manuscripts it is often impossible to learn much about authorship, the socio-economic conditions of the author and the circumstances in which a work was written. In the study of oral literature, however, this type of information is readily available and its inclusion in such a study is essential for a full understanding of the repertoire, for otherwise the literature will be dealt with in a vacuum. Thus, for example, the examination of economic factors enables us to appreciate the increasing invention of stories; an inquiry into the *dalang*'s literacy, and in what languages, provides a pointer to the sources of repertoire accessible to him; a study of the transmission of repertoire explains the differences in repertoire between teacher and pupil.

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[4] For a detailed study of the style and presentation of the *penglipur lara* see Sweeney (1973 b). Stories derived from the Rāmāyaṇa are very rare in this genre. One text was adapted into literary Malay at the end of the nineteenth century (Maxwell 1886). In my research into this genre, I discovered only one story-teller with some knowledge of a Rāma story: his version was very close to the shadow-play version. The teller was from the northern state of Perlis. It may be noted that a student of mine recorded a tale from an amateur story-teller in Johor which was obviously based on the *swayembara* episode of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. No *Rāmāyaṇa* names survive, however, in this version, and instead of a bow, a cannon is employed in the contest!

[5] E.G. the dialogue often takes on dramatic form; and on occasion masks, are employed.

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I have therefore included an outline of such information in an appendix to this paper.

Two types of Malay shadow-play (*Wayang kulit*) are found in north Malaya and Southern Thailand: the *Wayang Siam* and the *Wayang Jawa*. Both, in spite of their names, are Malay forms, and are similar in technique, the main differences being in matters of repertoire, appearance of the puppets and music. Of the two types, by far the more popular is the *Wayang Siam*, there being something in the region of 300 *dalang* (puppeteers) in the state of Kelantan (the heart of Malay *Wayang* country) alone. In contrast, the *Wayang Jawa*, which is strongly Javanese influenced, is now almost extinct. It is the *Wayang Siam* which performs the tales of Rāma, the *Wayang Jawa* presenting only Pañji and (rarely) Pāṇḍawā tales.

The Malay shadow-play is transmitted orally and there is no written documentation to assist us in tracing its history. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the technique of the Malay shadow-play originates from Java. The operating-box is very similar to that still used on occasion in Bali, which seems likely to represent a form of that earlier found in Java. Furthermore, many of the technical terms employed are borrowed from the Javanese.

It is possible to discern a number of other extraneous influences in the *Wayang Siam*. For example, the puppets, especially those of leading male characters with their pinnacled crowns, exhibit Thai influence; the music owes much to the pan-Islamic tradition, and as stated, the basic repertoire is derived from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Nevertheless, these influences have been synthesized and remoulded to suit the aesthetic needs of the Malays, so that the resulting art form possesses a very distinctive style.

A tree-metaphor is often used to distinguish between the various parts of the tales of Rāma performed in the *Wayang Siam*. The main part, regarded as the roots, trunk and branches of the tree, is that extending from before the birth of Rāvaṇa up to his death, and known as the *Cerita Mahraja Wana* (The Tale of Maharāja Rāvaṇa). The tale of Rāma's sons up to the reconciliation of Rāma and Sītā also falls into the branch category. This part of the repertoire is roughly parallel to the

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Hikayat Seri Rāma, the Malay literary version of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* There is then a great mass of minor stories generally referred to as *cerita ranting* (twig stories). My study of the repertoire involved an examination of over one hundred *dalang*; a representative sample consisting of the basic repertoire of twenty-four *dalang* was then subjected to detailed comparison. This revealed that the majority of motifs are also found in the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* (the Malay literary version) and/or the *Rāmakien* (the Thai version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*). None of the *Wayang Siam* versions, however, is identical with the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* or the *Rāmakien,* nor are any two *Wayang Siam* versions identical with each other: in fact, it may be said that each *dalang* possesses, to some extent, a distinct version, the motifs of which are, to a considerable degree, similar to motifs of the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* and/or the *Rāmakien.* This is not to say, however, that there is no *Wayang Siam* "version "and that the repertoire is merely the result of "dipping" into the literary versions by each *dalang.* In spite of wide variation the *Wayang Siam* versions possess a number of common features—frame of the plot, certain motifs and names, characterization and localization of events—which distinguish the *Wayang Siam* from other versions, and make it possible to speak of a *Wayang Siam* version or group of versions which, whatever the origin, have crystallized into a distinct from.

Examples of these common features are:

(*a*) *Frame of the plot.*—The *Wayang Siam* version differs from both the Malay literary version, the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* (*HSR*), and the Thai version, the *Rāmakien* (henceforth: *RK*), in that no mention is made of Rāma's exile. The plot is much more compressed, so that the abduction of Sītā is considered to take place on the journey home from the *swayembara* where Rāma won her hand. Further, the transformation of Rāma and Sītā into monkeys, and the encounter with Rāvaṇa's sister, *Śūrpaṇakhā*[6], are considered in the *Cerita Maharaja Rawana* to

[6] For the sake of convenience, the names used here, *i.e.* Rāma, Sītā, Rāvaṇa and Śūrpaṇakhā are the Sanskrit forms. The literary Malay forms are Seri Rāma, Sītā Dewi, Rawana, Sura Pandaki. The Malay *wayang* forms are Seri Rāma, Siti Dewi, Rawana (or 'Wana) and Siti Mayang.

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be attempts at this abduction. We find, too, a consistent omission of certain *HSR* episodes as, for example, Rāma's shooting at the hunchback's hump, the meeting with *Kikuken,* or the installation of Rāma's sandals. The plot of the *HSR* is generally parallel to that of Vālmīki (though by no means a translation of it; see above). In the Shellabear version of the *HSR* we see that the exile episode (although referred to) is not included. This is seen by Zieseniss (p. 187) as the initiation in the *HSR* of Indonesian levelling, a process which reached its culmination in the penglipur lara version collected by Maxwell (1886). This latter version "completes the reduction of Rāma to a mere fairy-tale hero" (Zieseniss, p. 187). In the *wayang Siam,* we see an intermediate stage in this reduction, where, although the basic Rāma story is still recognizable the plot has been cut down so that it largely conforms to a typical plot type of the Malay world, *i.e.,* that found in the Panji tales and the stories of the *penglipur lara.*

(*b*) *Certain motifs and names* which are common to *wayang* versions but are absent or differ from *HSR/RK*. Such motifs are:

(i) Shooting through palm trees growing on the back of a *nāga* during the contest for Sītā.

(ii) The setting adrift of Mah Babu Sanam (Skt.: Vibhīṣaṇa) by his brother Rāvaṇa.

(iii) The presence of and the role played by 'god-clowns'—a typical Indonesian feature.

(iv) Rāvaṇa's possession of seven or twelve heads (not ten as in the *HSR*).

(v) Certain names, *e.g., Maharisi Mata Api* (in *HSR*: Maharisi Kala; Sanskrit: Janaka); *Raja Lebis* (in *HSR*: Patala Maharayan; in Bengali: Mahi-Rāvaṇa); *Hanuman Ikan* (in *HSR*: Hanumān Tegangga; in Gujarati: Makaradhvaja, but in Malay he is half fish).

(*c*) *Minority motifs.*—There is in the *Wayang Siam,* (henceforth: *WS*) a large, yet to a certain extent, limited number of what may be termed "floating motifs", which appear in a minority of *WS* versions but which, judging from their wide area of distribution, are to be regarded as *WS* motifs. Some of these, *e.g.,* the battle between Rāma's followers and the three

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crow kings, are compatible with other versions and may have been omitted from the latter; others, *e.g.*, the reincarnation of Rāma and Sītā via transformation into seeds, fruit, flowers, etc., which appears to be a motif borrowed from the Malayo-Javanese Panji cycle, must be regarded as variants. It is not, of course, suggested that these common features are confined to the *WS*; many of them are proved to exist in other areas.

(*d*) *Localization of events*—Thus the majority of *dalang* believe that the Rāma story occurred locally. A number of *dalang* consider that Langkapuri (Langka) is situated in Langkawi, a small island off the north-west coast of Malaya. Others believe it to be near Bangkok. All would be sceptical to be told that Langka was Ceylon! Similarly, it is generally believed that the location of the *swayambara* for the hand of Sītā was in Singgora in South Thailand. Every *dalang* is able to cite 'evidence' for the correctness of his belief; for example, seven palms are still to be seen in Singgora.

(*e*) *Characterization*—The characters of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the *wayang* tale: Rāma is in general more effeminate, petulant, harsh and amorous, and lacks resource, depending more than in *HSR/RK* on his followers. Until the building of the causeway, Rāma is dependant on Lakṣmaṇa's wisdom and foresight. After this time, Lakṣmaṇa's role in this respect is, to a large extent, transferred to the astrologer Mah Babu Sanam (Vibhīṣaṇa) who figures even more importantly than in *HSR/RK*. An interesting insight into Rāma's character in the *wayang* version is provided by the episode in which Śūrpaṇakhā attempts to seduce Rāma. Here she succeeds, and Rāma sets up house with her! Even so, when her true identity is unmasked their relationship ends! In contrast with Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, who in the *wayang* version is made a hermaphrodite (the virtues of celibacy and asceticism do not appeal to the Malay *dalang*; their only explanation of Lakṣmaṇa's celibacy is that he is a hermaphrodite!), is gifted with second sight, has great wisdom and is a moderating influence on Rāma. We note a similar tendency in the *penglipur lara* version (Maxwell, 1886) for Rāma to become a mere fairy tale prince and there too Lakṣmaṇa has the powers of a shaman. We note, too, that in the *wayang* version, Rāvaṇa and his followers do not usually have very finely-drawn characters; in general they are reduced to

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the level of "all purpose baddies" and few *dalang* ever feel sympathy for them.

(*f*) Further, the fact that in a number of cases, where *WS* is parallel to *HSR/RK*, the majority of *WS* versions which include the episode are in general accordance as to which parts resemble *HSR* and which *RK*, indicates that the *WS* episodes in question are not merely a haphazard jumble of *HSR* and *RK* motifs. Thus, for example, in the episode of Bāli's (=Vālin) battle with the buffalo, many *WS* versions include the mention of the helping gods (=*RK*) and also that of the anthill (=*HSR*). Likewise in the burning of Langka, the *WS* is in many respects similar to *HSR* but the method of extinguishing Hanumān's fiery tail resembles *RK*.

Although similarity of *WS* motifs with *HSR/RK* does not prove that it is *WS* which is derived from *HSR/RK*, there is evidence that *WS* in its present state is the result of the intermingling of two main versions, Thai and Malay, which may be the literary versions of *HSR/RK* or oral forms parallel to them:

(*a*) The names of the chief protagonists are of the same or similar form to those of *HSR*. In a number of cases where the *WS* form is somewhat different, *e.g.*, Gaṅgga Masur, it is obvious that it is derived from *HSR*, thus in this case Gangga Mahasura. In some cases, the form of the *WS* name gives the impression of being the result of misreading or alternative reading of the spelling in a *HSR* text, *e.g.*, the name Jayasang for Jayasinga (s-ng). In a few cases, *HSR/WS* characters bear folk-names in *WS*, thus *e.g.*, Siti Mayang (for *HSR* Sura Pandaki), Maya Angin (for *HSR* Anjani).

(*b*) The motifs of *HSR* which are paralleled by *WS* are not found in any one (known) MS. of *HSR*. The "overall" version of *WS* cannot, however, be directly derived from an "original" version of the *HSR* for the variants and contradictions of various recensions of *HSR* are also reproduced in *WS*, *e.g.*, the several contradictory versions of the begetting of Hanumān and the encounter between Rāma and Sugrīva.

(*c*) Although *WS* displays more similarity with *RK* than with *HSR* in many cases, there is no general usage of Thai names, these occurring only sporadically in a few versions, *e.g.*, Bila

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Kua (=Thai Birakvan), Sida (for Sītā). Where a character is found in *RK* and *WS* but not (or at least in different circumstances) in *HSR*, the name is rarely Thai. In such cases the *WS* name is usually a folk-tale name, thus, *e.g.*, Āditya is Dewa Sinar Matahari, Indra is Dewa Cahaya Bulan, Suvarnamaccha is Tuan Puteri Ikan.

(*d*) In certain *WS* episodes, confusions and contradictions are found which can only have arisen as a result of mixing of Thai and Malay episodes. For details see Sweeney, (1972, 260).

(*e*) Although the *WS* in its present form is not a haphazard jumble of *HSR/RK* motifs, this is not to say that individual dipping into *HSR/RK* does not occur. An obstacle to this has, of course, been the high degree of illiteracy among *dalang*, the rarity of MSS. in the case of the *HSR*, and the language barrier in the case of *RK*. The latter is probably more accessible, for a printed edition is available and possessed by a number of Thais in the area. On the other hand, *HSR* MSS., were usually found only in the sphere of the nobility, and the printed editions were generally unknown.

"Dipping", when it occurs, is almost always through an intermediary. A *dalang* is likely to accept repertoire from any reliable source (see Appendix) and this may well be the owner of or person familiar with literary versions. Two Thai owners of texts told me that *wayang dalang* have asked about points of repertoire, and several *dalang* acknowledge that this occurs. The result of this type of dipping is that the material borrowed is usually only a short episode or motif. When a *HSR* on *RK* motif is found only in one *wayang* version, and especially when it does not blend well with the *Wayang Siam* version, this may be an indication of recent dipping.

Although the *Wayang Siam* version is the result of intermingling of Thai and Malay versions, there is, nevertheless, a considerable number of similarities with Javanese, Lao and Khmer versions. One interesting example is the episode of Rāvaṇa's changing himself into a lizard in order to gain entry to Berembun's (Skt: Viṣṇu) grotto and seduce the latter's wife. The same legend is cited by Moura (1883, II, p. 315) and it is said to explain one of the bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat. (There, however, Rāvaṇa is seeking entry to Indra's palace.) A possible

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similarity with a Lao version (Dhani, 1946) is the *wayang* name for the seer Janaka, *i.e.*, Maharisi Mata Api, or in one version Maharisi Ta Poi, (the sage with eye of fire), this eye apparently referring to Śiva's third eye. It is interesting to compare this with the Lao "seer called Tafai, the 'Flame-eyed.' " (Dhani, p. 11).

Few of the major motifs of *WS*—except localization of action—appear to be purely local. Although it is extremely difficult to prove that a motif is confined to a locality, a few minor motifs give the impression of being local, but they are often only found in one version, in which case they may, to some extent, be merely idiosyncratic, as *e.g.*, the imprisoning of Sītā under a bath-house, in a version from south Thailand. Idiosyncratic versions of episodes often occur due to forgetful ness. In the case of one old *dalang* who was approaching senility, forgetfulness apparently caused him to produce two versions of an episode. In either of these cases, however, if a pupil had been receiving the story, the idiosyncrasy might have been established. In Kelantan, in contrast with other areas, certain factors seem to militate against the perpetuation of gross idiosyncrasy and to exercise some control over the content of the basic repertoire. In Kelantan, a large number of *dalang* know and, at times, perform the story; and a large section of at least the older section of the populace is fairly well acquainted with the story. A *dalang* who introduces major changes in a well-known episode and/or introduces motifs which are not compatible with the existing *wayang* versions, lays himself open to criticism from the audience. Further, although a *dalang* may receive an idiosyncratic version from his teachers, he is not likely to restrict his accumulation of repertoire to the one source and is able to refresh his version from other sources. Where there are few *dalang* who know the story and where it is (now) little known in the society, the perpetuation of idiosyncrasy is far more likely. This appears to be the case in Patani, Perak and especially Kedah. A similar case seems to be that of the *penglipur lara* version of the Rāma tale as in Maxwell's version, which, recited by only a small number of persons, is more easily reduced to the level of a fairy-tale.

There is yet a further stage in the development of the tales of Rāma in Malay folk literature. The term *ranting* (twig) is

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used in the *Wayang Siam* to designate the mass of stories which, although featuring *Rāmāyaṇa* characters, are not parallel to Malay and Thai literary Rāma sagas (*HSR* and *RK*), nor thus to the Indian epic. As is clear from the name *ranting,* these stories are not considered to form a basic part of the repertoire, and consist of the later or minor adventures of the heroes and their offspring. Each is a complete story in itself, and the tales do not form a series in chronological sequence. Although a small number of *ranting* tales are common to many *dalang* and are fairly constant as regards content, the great majority are far more fluid in content than the basic repertoire, and in many cases stories are changed and invented.

A wide variety of motifs is found in *ranting* tales but the predominant influence is that of the Panji cycle of stories. A majority of the ranting tales, by reason of their plots/motifs are, in fact, Panji tales adapted to suit the *Rāmāyaṇa* characters of the *Wayang Siam.* Thus, Radin Inu Kertapati's role is taken by Rāma, that of Radin Galuh Cendera Kirana by Sītā, and that of Inu's brother by Lakṣmaṇa. The most obvious source from which the *Wayang Siam* has acquired these stories is the *Wayang Jawa,* which performs mainly Panji stories: several of the stories are common to both, and a number of *Wayang Siam* dalang state that the *Wayang Jawa* is the source of much of this repertoire.

In order to appreciate the process involved in the adaptation of Panji stories to the Rāma 'tree', it is desirable to examine an example of a *ranting* tale common to both the *Wayang Siam* and *Wayang Jawa* (and/or literary versions), and to compare the adapted version of the former with the pre-adapted form of the latter.

A good example is the following tale, in the form it was performed by a *Wayang Siam* dalang:

Sītā is rescued from Rāvaṇa by Rāma, but Rāma's father, Sirat Maharaja (=Daśaratha), objects to their reunion, stating that they must first be remarried. Temporarily, therefore, on Maharisi Mata Api's advice, Sītā wanders in the jungle, meets Tuan Puteri Hutan (='Jungle Princess') who guards the jungle-fauna, and stays with her, taking the name Mek Hutan.

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Rāma, with the clowns Pak Dogol and Wak Long, sets off to hunt birds with his blowpipe. He wings a bird, causing it to fall in Mek Hutan's cave. Rāma thus discovers and makes love to Mek Hutan whom he fails to recognize. The clowns return and inform Sirat Maharaja, who is embarrassed. Mandu-dari (Rāma's mother) summons Rāma and orders him to hunt for a pregnant mousedeer. During Rāma's absence, she summons Mek Hutan and orders her to be executed. Mek Hutan asks the executioner to place her corpse on a raft with flowers. He then kills her.

Rāma, hunting, smells flowers, and finds the raft and the corpse. He stabs himself, Wak Long then makes to kill himself but is afraid. Unfortunately, he stumbles and falls on his kris! Pak Dogol, the other clown, decides against suicide, returns and reports to Sirat Maharaja, who orders him to summon Hanumān, doing asceticism on Mount Mayang Tunggal. Hanumān finds the raft with Rāma and Sītā, whom he recognizes, and carries it to Sirat Maharaja who then discovers from the executioner that Mandudari is responsible. She is made to take her meals with a black dog. Mah Babu Sanam (=Vibhīṣaṇa) is unable to revive Rāma and Sītā. Pak Dogol therefore builds a candi pillar, raises the raft into the clouds and burns incense. Sang Kaki Betara Kala smells this, descends and questions Pak Dogol. He then obtains milk from the breast of the virgin nymph Lela Purba, prepares the antidote and restores Rāma and Sītā. Sirat Maharaja ties Mandudari under the palace and sets about planning the remarriage of Rāma and Sītā.

This is an ideal story to illustrate the assimiliation of Panji tales into the Rāma tree, for, unlike the majority of Panji tales in Kelantan, it is well-known in literary versions and it is thus a comparatively simple task to ascertain the changes and observe the process involved in the transformation.

The plot has remained largely that of the literary tale of *Ken Tambuhan.* It is thus interesting to note how it is grafted on to the Rāma tree; the join is made by causing Sirat Maharaja to oppose Rāma's immediate reunion with Sītā after her rescue from Rāvaṇa, on the pretext that she has been made unclean, Sītā is made to enter the jungle where she is in a position, to assume the role of Kn Tambuhan. Rāma then assumes the role

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of Inu/ Radin Mentri/Undakan Penurat, and Pak Dogol and Wak Long those of the *kedayan.* The parts of the *ratu* and *permaisuri* of Kuripan are taken by Sirat Maharaja and Mandudari. The story then proceeds along very similar lines to the version published by Teeuw, (1966) with only slight deviations, *e.g.*, the omission of the healing flower.

Characters from the *Cerita Mahraja Wana,* although not corresponding to any character in the Panji tale, may be introduced into the *ranting* tale to play parts in keeping with their characters and roles in the *Cerita Mahraja Wana.* Thus in the present example, Maharisi Mata Api is the adoptive father of Sītā; Hanumān, performing asceticism, is brought in to perform a task requiring strength: Mah Babu Sanam is introduced when a problem requires divination. Rāma characters corresponding to Panji characters may also retain their original characteristics. Thus in a number of stories, Lakṣmaṇa takes the role of Indu's brother, but he remains always the celibate. Sometimes, the characteristics of the performers of two corresponding tales are almost identical, as in the case of Pak Dogol and Semar, the god-clown in both. Similarly, Wak Long's role as comedian with a streak of cowardice is repeated in the role of Turas. On the other hand, the Panji characters may have an influence on the Rāma character: in the above example; Mandudari: becomes a most evil figure; Rāma becomes a great lover, befitting the role of Panji. When a characteristic, such as that of lover in the case of Panji, is prominent in the majority of stories, this appears to influence not only the character of Rāma in *ranting* tales but the effect is seen even into the basic part of the repertoire. Thus, as one old *dalang* remarked, "Rāma can never resist a woman."

This tale is distinguished from many *ranting* tales in that its content is fairly constant. As stated, the content of the mass of these tales is not very fixed. This is partly due to the fact that most of the tales do not bear titles; when titles are used, moreover, the same tale may have different titles, or two different tales may bear the same title. The only way of identifying them is by giving a resume of the content; some *dalang* use the term *umbi cerita* (the root of the tale) to speak of the title. This *umbi* implies a resume. There is thus no "handle" by which to refer to a tale and this may partly account for the great fluidity of the

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content. The same problem of title is also present, of course, in the literary Panji tales; in oral versions this is magnified.

Although the great majority of *ranting* tales are derived from the Panji cycle, few are easily recognizable as parallel to known literary versions. Most of them are fairly short, and must be regarded as fragments, not containing the full circle of a typical Panji romance. The typical motifs of the Panji tales are, however, easily recognized in these *ranting* tales. For example, the following regularly occur:

(*a*) Changing of names. In one tale, for example, Rāma, about to do asceticism, changes his name to Seri Panji Anggung Gunung; Lakṣmaṇa becomes Mesa Hilir; Pak Dogol, Tebu Temandu and Wak Long, Damang Semangkah. The name change may also involve change of appearance, but this is not common with well-known puppets.

(*b*) Sītā is regularly abducted. The story then centres around her recovery. Other women are also abducted, as for example, the princesses destined for Rāma's sons.

(*c*) Rāma is a great lover. In many stories he is Panji, the lover of a variety of females.

(*d*) Characters become *dalang*. In one tale Sītā becomes a *dalang*. In several tales, Rāma becomes a *dalang* and performs the first *wayang*.

(*e*) Sītā sometimes becomes a man; she defeats rivals and marries princesses; in a few tales she becomes a *penjurit agung*, robber).

(*f*) Panji names. The enemies of Rāma and/or his sons etc., regularly have names from Panji tales, *e.g.*, Ratu Kembang Kuning, Ratu Metaun, Ratu Menua (Benua) Keling.

Although many *ranting* tales may be merely adaptations of existing Panji tales, most *dalangs* do, to some extent, compose parts of their repertoires. This may merely consist of some tampering with the plot and the addition of new scenes, or may entail composition of new stories. The majority of *dalang* are somewhat loath to admit that they invent tales. This can only really be appreciated when we understand the *dalang's* attitude to the Rāma tree. The story of Rāma and Rāvaṇa is no mere

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legend for the *dalang*; it is history and generally believed implicitly. It is the root, trunk and branches of the tree which are considered to be most inviolable and it is admitted that many *ranting* stories may not be so historically valid. Nevertheless, the more conservative of *dalang* so far from approving of artistic creation, denounce invention of stories as *belawak* (lies and untruth). The fact still remains, however, that few, if any, *dalang* are entirely innocent of such invention. The method is to juggle about with various well-used motifs such as the examples listed above. The *dalang* is not, of course, confined to using Panji motifs. Often, duplications of motifs from the *Cerita Maharaja Wana* are included: a notable example is that of Hanumān's begetting sons. In *ranting* stories, he is often caused to produce further sons who then indulge in various adventures. The permutation of well-used motifs results in the creation of a story which, although new, does not strike one as an obvious fabrication; similarly it is possible to give a new twist to an old tale. Sometimes, motifs may be taken from films or modern stories but they are unlikely to be used is *ranting* stories featuring Rāma characters unless they harmonize with the existing repertoire. The more obscure of *ranting* tales are sometimes termed—by extensions of the metaphor—*cerita daun* and *cerita bunga* (leaf and flower stories).

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APPENDIX

THE MALAY SHADOW-PLAY

The performance of the *Wayang Siam* is no mere recital. Apart from speaking for his characters and himself, the *dalang* is manipulating his puppets, directing the orchestra and straining his ears for a false note or beat. He must know intimately the characters of his puppets, especially the major ones, which often have quite complex personalities. A good *dalang* is able to identify himself so completely with the parts he is playing, that he himself experiences with intensity, the emotions of his characters. Each performance is a dramatic re-creation of the story, there being no fixed "lines" to be learnt. Thus the *dalang*, while keeping within the bounds of his plot and faithful to the characters of his puppets, has quite some scope to vary the presentation of the story to suit his audience, and he also reveals in creating the drama, his own attitudes towards life and society.

The performance by the puppets consists of talking and action. While the puppets are speaking, the orchestra is silent, except for an odd rattle of the instruments to emphasize the ejaculations of the characters. When talking, the puppets move little, except that their arms (and the mouths of clowns and sages) are moved to illustrate their speech and to indicate the speaker. There may also be minor changes of position on the "set", but major action will require orchestral accompaniment. The clowns are considerably freer in this respect, and during the dialogue, are accustomed to indulge in various capers. On the other hand, during action, such as walking, fighting and flying, the puppets speak very little and the orchestra, consisting of oboe, drums and gongs, plays various tunes in accordance with the type of action and the character appearing; the movements of the puppets are geared to the rhythm of the orchestra.

Whereas *Wayang Jawa* puppets are clearly imitations of Javanese *Wayang Purwa* and *Wayang Gedog* puppets, the style of *Wayang Siam* puppets is distinctive. In common with Thai *Nang Talung* puppets, the majority have one arm articulated, but are, on the whole, somewhat larger, and if not always more coarsely carved, at least more robust than *Nang Talung* puppets. Traditional male princely characters in both are similar in appearance, both featuring the typical Thai pinnacled crown, but they are by no means identical. Apes and sages of the *Wayang Siam* are very similar to the *Nang Talung*, but certain of the *dewa* (demigods), *rākṣasa* (orges) and *patih* (captains) are clearly limitations of Javanese models. Female characters are usually depicted with face in profile, unlike the *Nang Talung* females which are *en face*, and the traiditional female head-dress has a distinctive form. Compared with Javanese *Wayang Purwa* puppets, the structure of *Wayang Siam* puppets is far from stable. There is usually no difficulty in recognizing the types—thus for example, noble princes, coarse princes, apes, sages, captains—which are fairly

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constant in form, but it is often impossible to identify individual characters, the form of which, except for a number of chief protagonists, is far from standardized, and a *dalang* may well be incapable of identifying many of the puppets of another *dalang*. Often, moreover, a *dalang* will ascribe a name quite arbitrarily to a puppet of the correct type. Many of these names are not permanent and the names of minor puppets are often changed to suit the drama performed. Thus, in an average collection of puppets, numbering well over one hundred pieces, those which are constant in form among the majority of *dalang* number only about thirty. Even in the case of these characters, certain variations are found and several different forms of the hero Rāma occur.

The language of the *Wayang Siam* is the Kelantan-Patani dialect of Malay but the idiom of the performance differs from that of daily speech. This is due to the fact that the *dalang* distorts his language in a number of ways in order to achieve a heightened effect. The *wayang* heroes are noble princes and demi-gods who exist on a higher plane; the *dalang* cannot allow such heroes to speak the language of peasants. As neither he nor his audience is likely to be very familiar with classical Malay, he achieves the desired high-flown effect by introducing various distortions which results in an idiom still intelligible to his auidence, yet sufficiently different from daily speech to be a convincing medium of communication for higher beings. In contrast, the clowns and "country bumpkins" who represent in some respects, mediators between the higher plane of the heroes and the lower one of the auidence, when conversing together, use the normal peasant dialect. It should be noted that the chief clowns of the *Wayang Siam* perform the same role as the *panakawan* of the Javanese and the *penasar* of the Balinese shadow-play. The chief clown of the *Wayang Siam* is better described as a "god-clown", for he is regarded, as in Java, as the reincarnation of the god Sang Yang Tunggal.

The majority of *dalangs* are found in paddy-growing areas. The *wayang* season thus begins in earnest only after the paddy harvest, and extends to the beginning of the rainy season. A popular *dalang* may expect to receive invitations to perform which will keep him occupied throughout the season. The traditional way of holding the *wayang* for entertainment purposes was that one man, a family or even a village would shoulder the expense on some great social occasion such as marriage or circumcision. Nowadays, however, in Kelantan and Southern Thailand, by far the vast majority of performances are organized as a business enterprise. The result seems to be that *wayang* is now enjoying a possibly unprecedented wave of popularity. The popularity of the *wayang* cannot be attributed to cultural nationalism expressing itself in support of a traditional Malay art, for the *wayang*, on the whole, does not interest the more sophisticated of townsfolk, who have their televisions, and is above all the entertainment of the rural people; and few *dalangs* are townsmen. In effect, it seems there has always been a demand, and the astute Kelantanese business sense is now catering for it.

In brief, the system works as follows: an individual with a conveniently situated piece of land will fence it off and erect a *panggung* (stage). He will

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then invite a *dalang* and his troupe to perform. The agreement may be for a fixed or an indefinite period, in the latter case, as long as a profit is being realized. The proprietor will sell tickets at the gate. A licence must be obtained and tax amounting to about twenty per cent of the takings must be paid. The *dalang* will be guaranteed a fixed payment which will be divided among the troupe-members, the *dalang* receiving the largest share. The number in a troupe is theoretically twelve excluding the *dalang*, but in practice it is common to find nine or ten inclusive. A succession of *dalangs* will be invited to perform at the same location and each new performer will strive to do a little better than his predecessor. An alternative method is for a *dalang* to rent the enclosure from the owner and then organize the enterprise himself. Although at first sight this might appear to be a more rewarding method, it is not popular with the majority of *dalangs* for there are all types of problems to be dealt with, and in general, *dalangs* who rent enclosures are the less successful ones who have not received invitations to perform.

Very few *dalangs* live entirely on their incomes from the *wayang*, and those who attempt to do so have a meagre existence during the rainy season when they are forced to live on what has been saved during the *wayang* season, and this is seldom much. The great majority of *dalangs* and all the musicians have a secondary occupation, and where the *dalang* does not enjoy much success, the *wayang* will be his secondary occupation. Secondary occupations fall into two categories: the magico-religious and the "secular". The "secular" secondary occupation of the majority is tending their patches of land, usually paddy-field. The other type of secondary work, which may be done in conjunction with a secular occupation, is that connected with magico-religious practices. Thus, approximately half of Kelantanese *dalangs*, though less of the younger generation, practise in their spare time as *bomoh* (folk practitioners).

The *wayang* is not always a mere entertainment in the Western sense, and the *dalang* has a dual role in society: entertainer and spirit medium, of which the former predominates: the *dalang* may perform between two hundred and three hundred shows in a year of which it is unlikely that more than one or two will be held primarily for purposes other than entertainment. In a sense, of course, every series of performances is a ritual in that before the start of the series, offerings are made and invocations directed to the denizens of the spirit world with the aim of placating the spirits and thus ensuring harmony during the show. The performance itself, however, is most definitely entertainment for humans, not spirits. The magico-religious role of *dalang* assumes greatest importance during the *berjamu* (feast for spirits) rituals. These rituals are performed for various purposes: propitiation of spirits, releasing a person from a vow, and intitiating a pupil; but their form is basically the same and consists of a synthesis of Javanese *wayang* ritual and local spirit mediumship. Although all the *berjamu* rituals involve propitiation, it is *menyemah* which is expressly performed for this purpose, having as a major aim, the warding off of the threat of cholera by placating the local spirits. Here the *dalang* symbolizes the collective aspirations of the inhabitants of an area and by performing the

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menyemak, some collective action is being taken, through the *dalang,* to interpret and combat an explainable danger where otherwise there would be blind fear of the unknown. The question of the *dalangs'* role in the magico-religious sphere is complicated by the fact that many *dalangs* also function as folk practitioners and although this may, to some extent, be regarded as an extension of the dalang's magico-religious role, this secondary occupation is not generally considered to be an intrinsic part of being a *dalang,* although it may enhance his reputation as an individual.

The vast majority of *dalangs* learn their art from a teacher, the few exceptions to this merely imitating the performances of others. The teacher is rarely, however, the *dalang's* father and the art is not hereditary. A comparison of the repertoire, performance and ritual of a *dalang* with those of his teacher revealed, in every case examined, considerable differences. There are several reasons for this: it is rare that a *dalang* learns everything from one source and it is not unusual to have had more than one teacher (whether this be admitted or otherwise). A novice may learn the rudiments from a relative or neighbour who knows a little *dalang-ship* and then join a troupe as a muisican or have himself accepted as a pupil by a *dalang* of repute. A *dalang* may further learn pieces of repertoire from persons who are not even *dalangs,* and information is also gleaned by observing the performances of other *dalangs.* It is clear, therefore, that every *dalang's* knowledge resembles to a greater or lesser extent a pot-pourri gathered from several sources.

An individual may wish to become a *dalang* for several reasons, but the primary motive is nearly always that he experiences intense pleasure from observing the *wayang* and that he has the urge and *angin* to perform himself. *Angin,* usually meaning "wind", here has a more specialized sense. It implies not only a strong penchant for the *wayang,* but also a susceptibility to be moved greatly by the rhythm of orchestra and a capability of identifying oneself completely with the characters of the drama, causing one to experience intense emotion. If an individual does not control his *angin,* he may lapse into a trance, a state of auto-hypnosis, which in the *berjamu* ritual is deliberately induced.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN THE MALAYSIA

By **ISMAIL HUSSEIN**

The Malays of the Malay Peninsula are totally Islamised; in fact within the society, to be converted into Islam is expressed as 'to become a Malay' (=masuk Melayu). There was an Indian-derived script in the pre-Islamic period; we have stone-inscriptions in this script dating from the end of the seventh century. However, the classical Malay literature that we have now is written entirely in the Arabic script during the Islamic period. But in spite of this, pre-Islamic Indian literary traditions keep persisting, and with it the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition. Unfortunately, Indian literary elements in Malay have been badly studied, most of the 25 odd *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscripts available having hardly been touched upon. Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* scholars have so far concentrated on the three published manuscripts/versions, that of Roorda van Esynga, Shellabear and Maxwell. As to the large number of related Indian-derived fiction (hikayat) which would assist us so much in the understanding of the nature of Indian influences, and with it the understanding of Malay *Rāmāyaṇa*, these have so far hardly received any academic attention.

Within the Malay Archipelago, Java and Bali have always been the focus of studies on the Indian influences in the area, and generalisations on the two islands are often unfairly extended to the surrounding area. Bali and Java are however very much of exceptional cases. Bali has never been Islamised, so it provides an unbroken continuity with its Hinduistic past. Java is Islamised, but its very strong Hindu-Javanese substratum, and its very rich architectural and other material heritage from the Indian period, makes it very much an exception. The Malays of the peninsula on the other hand have none of these features, the country is devoid of Indian architectural monuments. A few of the older Bhuddist-Hinduistic customs persist in the Malay way of life, in their wedding ceremonies and some other rituals, but all of these are devoid of their former religious significance. Many studies have of course been made by European scholars on the pre-Islamic elements, in Malay culture; these scholars have been excited by their

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historical significance and exoticism. But much of these are at the expense of distorting the actual nature of the 'post-Islamic' Malay culture. A case in point is the interest on the shadow play (wayang kulit) art, an art which is isolated on the north-east coast of the peninsula, and was dying, had it not been for the encouragement and interest given by European connoisseurs. Dr Amin Sweeney had made an excellent documentation and study of this which is important for us here, since it related to the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition. But whatever it is, the significance of the *wayang* within the Malay society can in no way be compared with its tremendous role within the Javanese society.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition in Malaysia then has to be looked into within this context. It is how the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition persists within an essentially Islamic society; the *Rāmāyaṇa* within such a society is understandably regarded as part of the Hindu-Buddhistic religious beliefs. The Indian cultural tradition had been deeply implanted upon the Malay mind for centuries, and with Islamisation from about the 13th century, confrontation between the two cultures was inevitable. But it had been an ever peaceful confrontation. It is remarkable that the earliest copy of the Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscript that we now have, deposited in the Bodleian Library in 1633, had been collected at the peak of an extremely (Islamic) religious period in Malay literature. The text was written in the Arabic script in a vocabulary obviously shaped by the new Islamic civilisation, and although there were slight attempts to adapt and change a few names and incidents, the essential story remained in tact. The most 'permanent' or the most 'pure' form of the Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition is embodied in these hand-written manuscripts. But within an essentially agrarian and illiterate society, the test of popularity and endurance of such a tradition, should not be expected within the hand-written manuscripts which were extremely limited in circulation. It is in the oral forms that we must look into. Here it is first borne by the shadow play form. The Malay shadow play being a continuous living tradition from the past and being confined to a small homogenous area in the peninsula, should theoretically maintain a measure of consistency in its form and content. The actual oral tradition on the other hand, being widespread and diffused, would not maintain such a consistency, so one could expect

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tremendous diverences. By all indications the spread of the *Rāmāyaṇa* stories within the Malay society, both in the written and oral forms, have been extensive and deeply rooted. But of course in the confrontation with the Islamic philosophy, its shape and ideals have been eroded or modified. With Islamisation, the *Rāmāyaṇa* story soon lost its 'religious' connotation, and conscious attempts were made to obliterate its 'Indianness', especially by substituting the proper names. Islam is strictly a severe and rational religion and it lacks the mythology and fantasy that the Malay people had been used to. So the Indian world of demi-gods and super-natural beings continue to fill in the gap, and they are 'secularised' —they became mere stories and fantasies. As such the *Rāmāyaṇa* story for example is open to all types of modifications and interpolations. But due to this 'secularisation' too, it is possible to reintroduce the Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* as a school text-book during this century, and together with it to revive with pride the *Rāmāyaṇa* wayang tradition and from there it has now extended to 'Rāmāyaṇa-dances,' which is supported by the Malaysian Ministry of Culture itself. *Rāmāyaṇa* is in fact reviving in Malaysia now, thanks to nationalism and historical pride, and above all due to the search for unifying elements for the new Malaysia. The *Rāmāyaṇa* motif that is being revived in Malaysia, although based on its indigenous tradition, is coming closer in its ethical ideals to the basic Indian *Rāmāyaṇa*.

As I have indicated the 'purest' form of Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* is embodied in the hand-written manuscripts, the earliest available manuscript came from late 16th or early 17th century. Although some 25 old manuscripts are available, focus of attention has been exclusively placed on two recensions, that of Roorda van Esynga (published in 1843) and of Shellabear (published in 1915). The Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* version as exemplified by these two recensions differ considerably from Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, and at the beginning scholars thought that this was due to Indonesian influence. W. Stutterheim and A. Zieseniss who did major works in the subject however pointed out to the Indian sources for nearly the whole of the saga, and Zieseniss also demonstrated that it represented a post-epic saga and was carried by word of mouth to the Archipelago between the 13th and 17th centuries, partly from Western and partly from Eastern

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India. Amin Sweeney once made the observation that the study of other Malay manuscripts reveals that much more of the Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* resembles the Thai Rāma Saga than is apparent from the Stutterheim-Zieseniss research, but no published data are yet available on this. Amin Sweeney's major attention was concentrated exclusively on the Rāma stories in the Malay shadow play (the Wayang Siam). He compared extensively some 24 versions from the living puppeteers, and then counter-compare these with the Malay and Thai literary versions. The variety of the wayang versions is as to be expected; no two versions are identical to each other, but all of them possess common features which distinguish them from Malay and Thai literary tersions. But the connection with the literary version is also obvious; the majority of the motifs of the wayang stories are also found in the Malay and/or Thai literary versions. So in all we can speak of a Rāma wayang version, but this we cannot do with the actual Malay oral version. Unfortunately so far only one Malay Rāmāyaṇa oral story has been collected and transcribed, and this was by William E. Maxwell, published in 1886. Juan R. Francisco made an extensive comparison of this text with that of the Malay literary version and with the general *Rāmāyaṇa* version. This folk version is still recognisably a Rāma story, in spite of the localisation of certain personal and place names, and the expected interpolations and accretions. The main motif remains.

It is from here that I would like to draw the attention to the University of Malaya Malay Manuscript No. 20, entitled *Syair Agung* which has no other copy known and which has never been taken into notice before. *Syair Agung* is a long narrative poem, the manuscript is in three volumes, totalling nearly a thousand pages, and containing about ten thousand four-lined verses in the *syair* form. The *syair* form, though Arabic in name, has now been proved to be indigenous, and was first popularised early in the 17th century to propagate Islamic teaching. *Syair Agung* is a long-winded narrative of the love and life as well as adventures and wars of a great king, King Agung (agung=grand, illustrious, supreme), with his two 'cousins', Halam and Cahaya Keinderaan. The relationship of the trio, not considering their birth, reminds us very much that of Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa-Sitā. Cahaya Keinderaan became the lover and then

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the wife of Agung, while Halam was the ever loyal 'brother' and companion to Agung. In fact the first 1,750 verses of the poem (from page 1 to page 183) follow the major motif of *Rāmāyaṇa*, that of love, of the heroine's kidnap by an evil king, of the long search, and finally of rescue. On first impression, none of the proper names resembles those in the Vālmīki and Malay *Rāmāyaṇa* versions so far known; the name Langkapuri (the Malay form for Laṇkā) occurs in the later stage of the story but in a totally different context. Another place name Anta Beranta which occurred in Maxwell's version of Malay oral Rāma story, re-appeared in *Syair Agung* as Beranta, but again in dissimilar contexts. The incidents that grow within the basic framework for the larger part hardly remind us of the *Rāmāyaṇa* although most of them are undoubtedly Indian in origin. With all these the idea that the *Syair Agung* is in anyway connected to *Rāmāyaṇa* is purely hypothetical; it needs intensive comparison and study before any definitive statement could be made. But if we assume for the time being that the first part of the *Syair* is derived from the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition, then we can make some interesting observations. The names of the major characters Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā have been completely Malayised in extremely fitting ways; Rāma is renamed as Agung, 'The Supreme One', Lakṣmaṇa is substituted by the name Halam (=Alam), 'The World', while Sītā has become Cahaya Komderaan (cahaya=light; ke-*indera*-an=realm of the gods), 'The Light of Heaven.' And if we consider the complete *Rāmāyaṇa* motif of love, kidnap, search and rescue should come as the first one-fifth of a long story about the life of a great king, then perhaps we could imagine the Rāma story here as has become a sort of initiation rite for a kingly life. This is indeed a little far-fetched, but it is an interesting thought. Of course Agung has lost much of the moral ideals of Rāma. Once while in search for Cahaya Keinderaan for example (see 6. xiv below) he was challenged by Halum to prove his manhood by sleeping with a princess—and he did although he professed many times that his love was only for Cahaya Keinderaan and he would commit suicide if he didn't find her. In his later kingly life, that is in the continuation of the story beyond the *Rāmāyaṇa* motif, Agung kept remarrying, while Cahaya Keinderaan remained pathetically helpless but ever loyal wife.

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The loyalty and dedication of Halam towards Agung proved true till the very end, although Halam was by no means an ideal man especially in his later life, if considered by his behaviour towards women. In fact one can generalise that there is degeneration of moral and ethical values in the *Syair Agung* with the exception of an emphasis on loyalty towards the king—and this last fits in very well with the feudal Malay value system. But this degeneration of moral and ethical ideals must also be seen in the fact that *Syair Agung* is a rather late version. Internal and external evidences indicate that the text must have been put down into writing from oral tradition during the second half of the 19th century, and this was done as it was specifically mentioned at the request of a Chief (=Penghulu) (Vol. 2, page 227). *Syair Agung* is in fact an amalgamation of various types of literary motifs already present in Malay literature; most of them are of the Indian-type, but there are also traces of Javanese and Islamic influences. The importance of *Syair Agung* is not to bo seen in the actual version of the Manuscript No. 20, but in its possible archetype which might have existed earlier in Malay literature whether in written or oral form. The 'degeneration' of the present version is understandably the result of centuries of imposition of Islamic teaching, thus eroding the values and meanings of a former culture. But the fact that late in the 19th century a motif of the *Rāmāyaṇa* still lingered on in the Malay mind and this motif was very much different from the versions that persist in the living tradition of the Malay shadow play—this certainly speaks very much for the place that the *Rāmāyaṇa* had taken in the Malay culture. This also should give the validity for its rightful revival in the new Malaysian culture.

Below is given the outline of the first 183 pages (1,750 four-lined verses) of the *Syair Agung*. The war of annihilation of the evil king who kidnapped Cahaya Keinderaan occupies the next 175 pages (about 1,660 verses). The remaining 638 pages of the manuscript relate the less adventurous period of the king. Cahaya Keinderaan is here abbreviated as CK:

(i) A king of the upper-world Gangga Saktī married Gemala Sakti and had two children Betara Indera and Betara Udara. The children later married and three grand-children were born to king Gangga Saktī,

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two of them were named Sulung Mengindera and Sulung Putera. The three children were brought down to earth, transformed as three flowers, dropped into a pool where wild animals came to drink.

(ii) A goat and a deer came to drink at the pool and swallowed two flowers leaving one. The animals became pregnant, the goat gave birth to a human boy, Agung Gempita, while the deer to a girl, Cahaya Keinderaan (CK). Both of them were brought up in the jungle with love by their mothers.

(iii) The other flower left in the pool was swallowed by a tigress, which later gave birth to a boy, Halam Gempita.

(iv) The three children were brought up separately in the wild jungle. One day while wandering about Agung met with Halam, and later on with CK. The three of them lived together when the tigress (Halam's mother) ate the goat and the deer. Halam then killed his mother in order to demonstrate his solidarity with the other two. The three of them left their jungle home and wandered for 44 days in search for human settlement.

(v) They finally met a fairy god-mother Nenek Kebayan, (further abbreviated as NK) who adopted them. Sultan Syah Johan, the king of Beranat, the kingdom in which they were, had a daughter Indera Bangsaman. While walking Halam playfully shot an arrow at the King's palace, which then became tilted. The King promised the hand of his daughter to whoever that could straighten up the palace. Halam did so, but he was reluctant to marry the princess for fear of breaking up with Agung and CK. But everybody encouraged him, especially Agung, because Agung was becoming closer to CK. Halam agreed and he departed for the 40-day wedding ceremony at the palace with Agung accompanying him, leaving behind CK and NK.

(vi) A king of the genii by the name of Gambar Maha Sakti yearned to marry a beautiful princess, and from

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his horoscope CK should be his choice. He ordered his soldiers to kidnap her while she was asleep, and when her two companions were in the palace. Helplessly CK was forced to marry the genii king, even though she was in love with Agung.

(vii) In the palace Agung fainted on hearing the kidnap-news. On recovering he asked permission from the King to go in search for CK. Halam insisted on accompanying but Agung refused even though he agreed to a few soldiers to follow his trail later on. However, he gave Halam a ring (the stone of) which would turn red if he were in danger, and white if he was safe.

(viii) Outside the city Agung made use of his magical arrow to bring about a green winged horse (kuda semberani) on which he rode into the jungle. The next day the King ordered a group of soldiers to follow him. The King began to suspect the peculiar behaviour of three and guessed they must be from the upper-world.

(ix) Agung travelled 'with sadness and determination' in search of his loved one, and made a vow to commit suicide if he failed. Once he rested under a tree on top of which lived three ghosts (hantu rindu=ghosts of longing). The ugly and monstrous looking daughter of the ghosts fell in love with Agung and tried to marry him, but he resisted violently. The three ghosts then tortured Agung until he fainted several times.

(x) At this, in the palace, Halam's ring turned red which was the sign that Agung was in danger. Halam requested permission of leave from his wife in order to follow Agung, and he declined the King's offer of soldiers accompanying him. Outside the city Halam made use of the magic of his sword to bring about a white-coloured winged horse, on which he rode into the jungle. Arriving at a wide open field, he rested under a shady tree, on top of which were three monkeys originated from the upper-world, but under a curse by Gangga Betara—they would become human again if they were to meet a man of honour

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(amulia). The two big monkeys recognised Halam as their nephew. While they were telling this to the daughter, Agung overheard it. He fell down from the tree and beheaded the three monkeys. Two disappeared and turned into demi-gods, while one was transformed into a beautiful princess who captured Halam's heart. At the instigation of the demi-gods Halam married the princess. The demi-gods related to Halam that he and the princess were actually cousins. Halam related his search for Agung. The demi-gods requested Halam to take care of their daughter, gave him a magic ring and arrow, and - transformed the princess into Pahlawan Udara (Warrior of the Air). They also brought about a horse for her to ride to follow Halam in the search. The two demi-gods returned to the upper-world, while Halam continued his search with his new-found wife.

(xi) Agung was continuously being tortured by the ghosts; finally he was to be burnt up in a hole. At this moment, his grand-father Gangga Saktī came down to earth, rescued him and brought him up to the Upper-world, where he was washed, dressed, and made invulnerable before he was brought down to earth again, to the same spot where he was tortured. Agung feeling strong and fresh, was surprised to see Gangga Sakti besides him. Gangga Sakti told him of their relationship, and was happier still to hear that CK was his cousin because this would enable him to marry her. Gangga Sakti gave Agung a gemala, luminous bezoar (cambul gemala kurti) for use in setting up a kingdom or in trying to escape from any difficult situation. In order to use it the gemala had to be placed on the ground and the name of Gangga Sakti was to be called out. Also given was a ring which would fulfil all wishes. All these were in preparation for war against the king of the genii. Gangga Sakti then disappeared.

(xii) While Agung was riding towards the middle of the open field, he met Halam and Pahlawan Udara. The three of them then attacked and killed the three

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ghosts. The ghosts were transformed into demi-gods and they returned to the upper-world. Soon they descended to earth again to admit defeat to Agung, while informing that they were actually Merga Pati and had been under a curse.

(xiii) In their further wandering the trio came upon a prison made of copper in which were enclosed two sons of Raja Candra, i.e. Sulung Halim Udara and Usul Terjali, kidnapped by one king of the genii. Agung made Halam break the prison lock, the two princes were released and they offered their services to the trio. The genii king came and was furious at the escape of his prisoners. In subsequent struggle he was killed.

(xiv) The five companions then continued their journey and came upon a cave, called Gua Pancuran (Cave of Fountains) in which lived Seroja (Lotus) the daughter of Sultan Agas Shahperi who was doing ascetic devotion (tapa) on Ra'ina Mountain. On finding the entrance to the cave the five changed into birds, the two princess Sulaung and Usul, led the way to the princess. Agung was reluctant to follow because he did not want to meet any woman before he found his beloved CK. Halam however challenged Agung's manhood, and this forced Agung to enter. He slept with the princess during the night. Thus the princess was regarded as his wife. While bathing in the pool Agung realized that Pahlawan Udara (the disguised second wife of Halam) was in fact a woman and he seemed to be attracted to her more than to CK. After relaxing for seven days in the cave, they continued on their journey.

(xv) The five came upon another wide open field, the playground of the king of the genii (now called Sultan Agas Beranta). With the magic of his ring Agung created a resting place, which was quite close to Taman Angsuka, the forbidden garden built by the genii king to please his kidnapped queen. Agung and his companion obtained all this information from an old lady who was staying nearby.

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(xvi) Agung longed to see the Queen who might be his beloved CK. Knowing then the Queen was bathing in the pool, Agung transformed himself as a baby, and was carried by one of his companions who himself was transformed into a nurse. The Queen came to be extremely fond of the baby, and when leaving she gave the child a ring and a scarf, and promised to meet him again the next day. She informed the baby that he reminded her of her loved one. Agung became very sure that she was CK.

(xvii) Agung and Halam then transformed themselves into a beetle and a bird (burung serojawali; rajawali=king of birds?) and entered the palace. In the palace he transformed himself again into the genii king (Sultan Agas Beranta), while Halam changed back into himself. The Queen refused to sleep with the disguised Agung thinking that he was the genii king. However he was able to pursuade her to give a ring before he left her bedroom. Halam tried to sleep with the Queen's companion, Princess Seroja, but she chased him out even though he was able to get a scarf from her.

(xviii) The next day Agung and his companion again took the baby-nurse roles and met the Queen in the garden. The Queen saw her ring on the baby's finger and asked wherefrom they got it, and was told that it was from her bedroom. The Queen and her ladies began to be suspicious of the visitors and thought that they might be evil spirits; so she quickly retreated back to the palace, even though the baby pleaded in tears for her to stay. In the palace the genii king informed her that he was leaving for Pokok Nyiram Dewa (pokok=tree, nyiram=sprinkle, bathe, dewa=god, demi-god) to pay homage to Baginda Dewa.

(xix) In the meantime Agung and Halam discussed as to how to rescue CK. They then transformed themselves into birds, one into a parrot (nuri) and the other into a sen-jawangi (?) (senja=dusk, wangi=fragrant).

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Agung being disguised as the parrot informed the Queen that he was a messenger from Agung, her love. CK fell into tears and pleaded to the bird to ask Agung to rescue her from her misery.

(xx) The parrot then flew out of the room and later on when she was asleep re-entered. On opening her eyes she saw Agung, her long yearned for lover. She pleased him to rescue her, otherwise she would kill herself. Agung hid her and several of her maids in the gemala, luminous bezoar (that was given by Gangga Sakti?), and together with his companions rescued them out of the palace. Using the gemala again, he created a kingdom with a seven-tiered city, complete with ministers and warriors. The mood was joyous, the reunited trio related to each other their past experiences. Agung was made the King of the kingdom, CK his Queen, and Halam his Prime Minister.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN THE PHILIPPINES

By JAUN R. FRANCISCO

This paper is a discussion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* version as found in the literature of one of the ethnic groups in the Philippines. It will discuss the story relative to the Indian *Rāmāyaṇa* and to the version found in the Malay literatures. It shall also deal with the interpolations and accretions of the Philippine version; and its probable date.

In an early work[1] I discussed the Indian influences in Philippine literature in two levels, parallel elements and motif indices. The discussions were limited only to brief, or even fortuitous, sometimes hazy, episodes or indices. At that time, I had not discovered narratives showing extensive borrowings from a much greater literary tradition like the Indian. In a later work[2] I refuted some of my earlier conclusions, and put into sharper focus the indigenous nature of some of my earlier conclusions.

In 1968, I discovered a Maranao text titled *Maharadia Lawana*—a condensed version of the Rāmāyaṇa.

The Maranao version tells of Maharadia Lawana, the eight-headed son of the Sultan and Sultaness of Pulu Bandiarmasir. He was so irascible that his father banished him to Pulu Nagara, and island. Later he returned to his father's kingdom where he regained his father's grace.

In another kingdom, Radia Mangandiri and Radia Mangawa, sons of the Sultan and Sultaness of Agama Niog, set out on a 10 year sea journey to court Tuwan Potre Malaila Tihaia, daughter of the Sultan and Sultaness of Pulu Nabandai. On the way, they were shipwrecked and were, by coincidence, washed

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[1] See Jaun R. Francisco, Indian Influences in the Philippines (with special reference to language and literature) Quezon City, University of the Philippines, 1964.

[2] See Jaun R. Francisco, Philippine Palaeography. Quezon City: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 1973.

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ashore to Pulu Nabandia. Soon Mangandiri won the hand of Tuwan Potre Malaia Canding (Tihaia). But after some time, he and Mangawarna became homesick and decided to return to their homeland.

During the journey, Malaila Ganding saw a golden-horned deer grazing and wanted it caught. But the deer turned out to be a ruse so that Maharadia Lawana could abduct Malaila Ganding.

Meanwhile, Mangandiri dreamt that he begot a monkey child—Lakṣmaṇa. It turned out the dream was true. Later, Lakṣmaṇa, by accident, met Mangandiri, and Mangawarna and helped them rescue Malaila Ganding.

In the end, Lawana rules with justice, Lakṣmaṇa metamorphosed into a handsome datu. Mangandiri and his wife and his brother returned to Agama Niog, where they lived happily ever after.

To show the Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa's* influence on Maranao literature, the *Maharadia Lawana* (*ML*) will be compared with the *Hikayat Seri Rāma* (*HSR*)[3], the *Hikayat Maharaja Ravana* (*HMR*)[4] and a Malay *Fairy Tale* (*FT*) based on *Rāmāyaṇa*.[5]

The comparison shall be primarily on three aspects—the major characters and their relationships with each other; the names of the important places and episodes connected with these places; and interpolations and accretions.

The Major Characters

In the Maranao version, the birth of Radia Mangandiri or of his brother Radia Mangawarna, is not described, unlike in the *HSR/HMR* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The brothers are merely described as sons of Sultan and Sultaness of Agama Niog. Similarly, in the *Fairly Tale*, there is no mention of the birth of Sri Rāma (Mangandiri) nor of the heroine's. The *Fairy Tale*

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[3] Hikayat Seri Rāma (Text) in JRAS-SB LXXI, 1917. With introduction to this text, which is a manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, by W.G Shellabear, in JRAS-SB LXX, 1917.

[4] H. Overbeck in JRAS-MB XI, p. 111 Passim.

[5] W. E. Maxwell, "Sri Rāma, A Fairy Tale told by a Malay Rhapsodist", JRAS-SB, XVII, May 1886.

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merely relates that Sri Rāma was unhappy about his childless marriage with Princess Sakutum Bunga Satangkei.

Major Characters and Their Relationship with each other—

Maharadia Lawana	*Fairy Tale*	*HSR/HMR*	*Rāmāyaṇa*
Radia Mangandiri	Sri Rāma	Sri Rāma/Rāma	Rāma
Tuwan Potre Malano Tihaia	Sakutum Bunga Satangkei	Sītā Dewi/Dewi	Sītā
Lakṣmaṇa, son of Radia Mangandiri by Potre Langawi	Kra Kechil Imam Terganga	Tabalwai/ Janggadulawa	Kuśa, Lava
Radia Mangawarna	Raja Lakṣmaṇa	Lakṣmaṇa/ Lakṣmaṇa	Lakṣmaṇa
Lakṣmaṇa	Shah Numan	Hanumān	Hanumān
Maharadia Lawana	Maharaja Duwana	Ravana	Rāvaṇa

The names of Sītā and of her sons, Kuśa and Lava, are entirely different in *Maharadia Lawana*, as well as in the *Fairy Tale*. Sītā becomes Tuwan Potre Malano (Malaila) Tihaia (Ganding) in *Maharadia Lawana*, and Sakutam Bunga Satangkei—"Single Blossom on a Stalk"—in the *Fairy Tale*. In *HSR*, She is Sītā Dewi, born of the second Mandudari (the double of Ram's mother) and Daśaratha. It implies that Rāma in *Rāmāyaṇa* married his own half sister.

In the *Fairy Tale*, Kuśa and Lava are Kra Kechil Imam Terganga, which implies that 'the son is born a monkey (Kra), 'small monkey" (Kechil) "a leader among simians" (imam terganga). Kra Kechil's monkey birth is explained by the transformation of Sakutam and Sri Ram into monkeys on their excursion to acquire a son.

There is no clue to the entirely different development of his name from Kuśa-Lava (*Rāmāyaṇa*) to Tabalwari (*HSR*) and Janggapulawa (*HMR*). The question may be assigned to an independent source which may be indigenous Malay. In *HSR*, Ram's monkey son was not directly born of Sītā Dewi. As an embryo, he was massaged out of Sītā Devi womb, wrapped and

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thrown into the sea, where it fell into the mouth of Dewi Anjati, who gave birth to a monkey son.

But in the *Maharadia Lawana,* the identities of Kuśa and Lava are not clear. They could not be the sons of Mangandiri and Malaia Ganding who were childless, Nor could they be represented by Lakṣmaṇa. Lakṣmaṇa's birth (*ML*) is similar to the monkey-sons' birth in other versions, except the *Rāmāyaṇa.* Lakṣmaṇa is born of Potre Langawi, Queen of the East, who, mistaking Mangandiri's testicle for a precious stone, swallowed it. (In *ML*, Mangandiri dreamt he was gored by a wild carabao and his testicle was thrown to the east where it was swallowed by Potre Langaw). In *Rāmāyaṇa*—even in its popular version—this episode is entirely absent. Thus it may be safely said that this episode is traceable to indigenous literary traditions.

Lakṣmaṇa's birth is relatively complicated to trace. In *Rāmāyaṇa*, the monkey son is Hanumān. Hanumān becomes Shah Numan in the Fairy Tale, and Shah Numan is a "Grand parent" of Kra Kechil, (Shah appears to be a corruption of the Sanskrit *Hanumān,* the monkey general in the army of Sugrīva, who helped Rāma recover Sītā.[6] The title Shah may have been mistaken by the rhapsodist from Perak, who narrated the tale, to be corrupted in Hanumān. Shah Numan is a monarch in the monkey world by the Sea. Yet Hanumān's adventures are those of Kra Kechil, not of Shah Numan. In *HSR*, Hanumān[7] is the son of Sītā Dewi, and Sri Rāma and is born through Dewi Anjati. There seems no internal evidence to suggest Hanumān's development to Lakṣmaṇa in *Maharadia Lawana*. Even in the larger versions of episode in Daragen, this development is not verifiable.

A most interesting development is the relationship of Lakṣmaṇa and Sri Rāma (*FT*). Lakṣmaṇa, who bears the title of Raja, is Sri Rāma's elder brother. But this relationship changes slightly in *Rāmāyaṇa*. Here, Rāma (Sri Rāma, *FT*) is the first born of Daśaratha and Lakṣmaṇa the third, born of a different

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[6] Maxwell, loc. *cit*. writes a note to the name that Hanumān was the "monkey king in the *Rāmāyaṇa*." This is not exactly so.

[7] In an Indian version, Hanumān is the son of Rāvaṇa, the god of the winds, by Anjana, wife of monkey, Kesarī.

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mother. In *Maharadia Lawana,* they are Radia Mangandiri and Radia Mangawarna, respectively, brothers born of the same parents. Their relationship therefore forms a double single consanguinal line in contrast with the Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa kinship that forms a single double line. It is indeed interesting to note that certain cultural factors may be operating in the kin structure of the dramatis personae of the story.

Basing on the kinship pattern in *Rāmāyaṇa*, it would appear that Mangawarna is Mangandiri's younger brother. But the Mangandiri Mangawarna relationship seems more of equals than that of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa[8].

Lakṣmaṇa in the *Fairy Tale* is also a diviner, a man well versed in sorcery. This attribute seems to be an allusion to the art of divination still practised by Malay sorcerers and devil dancers. The attempts to divine whether Sri Rāma would have a child are exactly those of a Malay Pawang[9] of present day. Raja-Lakṣmaṇa's title and name are contradictory terms in the Malay language. Lakṣmaṇa, in Malay, means "Admiral", the name with which Hang Tuah compared himself in 15th century Malacca.[10] Maharadia Lawana (Rāvaṇa in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *HSR/HMR*) in the Maranao story is both villain and hero—although he is considered less of a hero because he abducted Mangandiri's wife. It is interesting to note that the Marunao story presents him first, describing him as an ambivalent young man—one with vile tongue.

Lawana is Maharadia Duwana, a ruler of less violent tendencies, in the *Fairy Tale*. Duwana's position seems

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8 Maxwell loc. cit.

9 Malay, pawang (1) magician experts in spells, talismans, drugs, and some peculiar industry; (2) a shaman who invokes ancestral spirits, Hindu gods, Arabian genie, and Allah to teveal the cause of illness or drought or pestilence and accept placatory sacrifices. See R. O. Windtcdt, "Notes on Malay Magic" JRAS-MB V. 2, pp. 342-347.

10 See R. O. Winstedt, *Malay-English Dictionary.* It is certain that the Hang Tuah of the 11th century Malacca may have been a ruling sultan who at the same time was an admiral of the navy.

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interesting.[11] He rules an island equivalent to Lanka Kachapuri. (See Names of Places). After he abducted Princess Sakutam, he discovered that he was consanguinally related with the Princess who stood to him as a daughter to a father. The kinship is not mentioned in *Rāmāyaṇa* and in *HSR*. In *HSR*, Rāvaṇa (Duwana, *FT*) actually had carried away the princess' double.[12]

Only two important place names are taken up here—Pulu Agama Niog and Pulu Bandiarmasir in *Maharadia Lawana*.

Maharadia Lawana	*Fairy Tale*	*HSR/HMR*	*Rāmāyaṇa*
Pulu Agama Niog	Tanjong Bunga	Mandupuri Nagara/ Mandurapura	Ayodhyā
Pulu Bandiarmasir	Kachapuri	Bukit Serindib (Later Langka-puri/Langkapura	Laṅkā

There are no traces of Daśaratha's City, Ayodhyā (*Rāmāyaṇa*), in the other versions. What appears to be its counterpart in *HSR* is Mandupuri Nagara. It has Sanskrit suffixes e.g. Maly Puri (Sanskrit Pura-City "Ruler's private apartments in a palace" and *nagara*, negara, Sanskrit, nagara-city)—"state, country, the top of the hill", "Mandupuri Nagara[13] may, therefore, mean "the city of Mandu on top of hill", if it were literally interpreted. Tanjong Bunga (*FT*) Sri Rāma's City—which could also be interpreted as his farther's city—shows an independent development. Similarly, no traces of Pulu Agama

[11] See H. Overbeck, "Hikayat Maharaja Ravana", JRAS-MB XI 2, Dec. 1933 pp. 111 passim. This Hikayat is not dated. Although its title carries the name of Rāvaṇa it really tells the story of Rāma, his exile, his search for Sītā his combat with Rāvaṇa, and the return of Sītā, who is purified in the pyre. The entire Hikayat shows the influences (?) of the *Rāmāyaṇa* the HSR, and it appears that it could be the source of the Fairy Tale.

[12] In the HSR, Mandudari had already given birth to a son, Seri Rama. When she was "given" by Dasarata to Ravana, Mandudari retired into the inner apartments. There, from the secretion of her skin she produced by massage a mass which she first changed into a frog, then into a woman exactly like herself. She dressed her double with her own clothes and sent her to the king.

[13] Although the story of Seri Rama in the HSR commences only on page 51 of the text, the city is mentioned for the first time on page 62.

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Niog—which may mean the "City on an island of accounts"—are found in other versions.

The events in Laṅkā (*Rāmāyaṇa*), Mandupuri (*HSR*), Langkapuri (*FT*), do not similarly occur in Puly Bandiarmasir (*ML*) which is reminiscent of the city of Bandjarmasin in southwestern Borneo. (Whether Bandiarmasir has any relation to Bandjarmasin is not certain; it is a problem that needs further investigation).

W.E. Maxwell[14] inteprets Kachapuri to be Conjeeveram (the Kanchipuram of the inscriptions and literature) in the Coromandel (Cholamandala) coast in South India. He interprets it further to be the "Kachchi in Tamil Literature[15]." There is no evidence to suggest the development of Kachapuri from Laṇkā. It seems that Kanchipuram was yet unknown when the *Rāmāyaṇa* was first told although it may already have been known when later versions—like the Tamil Rāma Story of Kambar—came out. Probably, the *Fairy Tale* may have other sources, besides *HSR*, from which this interesting interpolation may have been lifted. Even the phonetic development of the word is curious. Rāvaṇa's island kingdom, Bukit Serindib (*HSR*), was already known in Arab records on Southeast Asia as Serindib.[16] It was later called Langkapuri, which follows closely Laṇkā, the island kingdom in *Rāmāyaṇa*, with the Puri accretion.

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14 *Op. cit.*

15 *Ibid.* His authority is Yule's Glossary, pp.782.

16 Serindib is mentioned (Dimaski 1325) as one of the islands along with the west-east route (from Arabia) in which Malaya closes the chain—"serindib (Ceylon) and Sribuza—" see and Cf. J. L. Moens, "Srivijaya, Yava, en Katah, JRAS-MB XVII 2, January 1940, p. 85.

A check with the Malay Annals (Sejarah Malayu) does not show the name Bukit Serindib or Serindib.

But a modern name is known as Ceylon already (see "Outline of the Malay Annals: Shellabear's romanized edition, Singapore, 1909. Chapter XXVIII in "The Malay Annals of Sejarah Malayu" (The Earliest RECESSION from Ms. No. 18 of the Raffles. Collection in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, edited by R.O. Winstedt) JRAS-MB XVI 2, pp. 12-13.

Perhaps it owes its not being mentioned to the late composition of the Annals—between the 16th and 17th centuries. *Ibid.* pp. 17-34.

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The geographical identity of Puly Agama Niog and Pulu Bandiarmasir has not yet been ascertained. A check with Maranao historical records and literature yielded negative results. So did a check with known historical and literary texts in Old Malay and Old Javanese, particularly those contemporaneous with the introduction of the Rāma story in Indonesia and Malaya.

Important Episodes

The Maranao version reduced the Rāma story to almost microscopic size. The *Fairy Tale* is equally microscopic. However, the *HSR* version is relatively voluminous.

The episodes selected for discussion here are the winning of Sītā, the abduction of Sītā, the search for Sītā, and the return of Sītā. These episodes roughly correspond to the Bāla, Āraṇya, Sundara and the Yuddha Kāṇḍa-s of *Rāmāyaṇa.*

The winning of Sītā

Radia Mangandiri and Radia Mangawarna had learnt of the incomparable beauty and charm of Tuvan Potre Malano (Muhila) Tihaia (Ganding), daughter of the Sultan and Sultaness of Pulu Nabandai, and set out to court her. On their way, their ship was wrecked by strong waves and without their knowing, they were washed ashore to Pulu Nabandai. While recuperating there, they heard the sound of *agongs* and the music of *Kulintangs,* They were told that a *sipa* contest was being held to determine who should marry the princess—Malaila Ganding. The suitor who could kick the *Sipa,* a rattan ball, into the Lamin, the princess' penthouse, would wed her. Mangandiri joined in the contest and won.

The *Fairy Tale* does not tell how Sri Ram (Mangandiri, ML). won his wife Sakutam Bunga Satangekei (Malaila Ganding, ML), It starts with a description of the royal couple, who were childless. The *HSR* and *HMR* tell of how Rāma won Sītā by fulfilling her guardian Kula's condition—shooting an arrow through 40 palm trees. Only the bow is significant in winning Sītā. In the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, King Janaka offered Sītā in marriage to whoever could raise and string the bow.

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Rāma, not only raised and stringed the bow with one arm, but also snapped it asunder.

The Abduction of Sītā

In the *Fairy Tale*, Maharaja Duwana, by super-natural powers, flew from Kachapuri to Tanjong Bunga where he transformed himself into a golden goat. Sri Rāma, fascinated by the unusual animal, with his men, tried to capture it. But it escaped into the deep jungle. There, it became Duwana again, who by magic entered Sri Rāma's palace. Soon Sakutam fell under Duwana's spell, and they eloped to Pulu Kachapuri. There Duwana discovered that he could not marry her. He was her kin and stood as a farther to a daughter. When Sri Rāma returned from the chase, he discovered his wife was gone.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Sītā's abduction was accomplished by deception. Rāvaṇa (Duwana, *FT*) had ordered Manici to assume the form of a golden deer to lure away Rāma and his half brother, Lakṣmaṇa. While the brothers were capturing the deer, Rāvaṇa, disguised as a Brahmin (as in *HSR/HMR*) went to Sītā. After he won her confidence, be abducted her.

As in the *HSR*, the conversation between Sītā and Rāvaṇa in *Rāmāyaṇa* was congenial until the latter revealed his true intention. In the *Fairy Tale*, it was also friendly.

The setting in HSR is the jungle where the couple, accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, were in exile. In the *Fairy Tale*, the setting is a kingdom, specifically Sri Rāma's palace. This interpolation seems to be an independent development. The variations in the use of these motifs—the silver and golden fawns (*HSR/HMR*), the golden goal (*FT*), and the golden deer (*Rāmāyaṇa*)—show close affinity and also give a clue to the origin of the *Fairy Tale*.

The cause of Sītā's abduction in *Rāmāyaṇa* is also shown in *HSR*, although with variations. Śūrpaṇakhā (Sura Pandaki, *HSR*) who suffered humiliation in the hands of Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā's brother-in-law, told Rāvaṇa of the princess' exquisite beauty. Thus the abduction was motivated by revenge (Śūrpaṇakhā's) and by a desire (Rāvaṇa's) to possess a woman of such

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unsurpassed charm and beauty. In the *Fairy Tale*, the revenge motive is absent. Maharaja Duwana (Rāvaṇa in *Rāmāyaṇa HSR/ HEM*) having heard of Sakutam's beauty, falls in love with her.[17] In *HSR*, Rāvaṇa's attraction to Sītā's beauty is not mentioned.

There is no evident cause for Malaila Ganding's abduction in *Maharadia Lavana.* In the Maranao story, Malaila Ganding, spotted a golden horned deer grazing in a cogon field and wanted it caught, Radia Mangandiri set out to catch the deer, but before departing he told Mangawarna not to leave Malaila Ganding even if he called for help—which he did. But Malaila Ganding, on hearing her husband's call, threatened herself if Mangawarna would not leave her and help his brother. Mangawarna agreed but he warned Malaila Ganding— "When I go down, you close the windows and whoever knocks, do not open."

The deer, on seeing Mangawarna, divided itself into two and both deer ran away. One of them led Mangawarna in circles and soon Mangawarna found himself back to their house. There, he saw the wall of their house destroyed and was told that Malaila Ganding has been forcibly taken away by Maharadia Lawana, He said to himself, "That which we were after was Maharadia Lawana who disguised himself as a deer."

It is interesting to note that there is a common identifying element in the stories, particularly in the *HMR/HSR* and *Maharadia Lawana*: the presence of the golden deer, or golden goat or silver goat or golden gazelles or a deer with golden horns. These animals are coveted by the heroine in each story. These fantastic animals are, in each story. Rāvaṇa who drew away the heroes from the heroine.

No drawing of the protective magic circle is evident here as in the Malay versions and some Indian versions, nor of Sītā

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[17] Sakutum Bunga Satangkei is described thus ".....her waist could be encircled by the four fingers and the thumbs joined, how her figure was as slim as the menjelei (a kind of grass or weed, something like millet) stem, her fingers as slender as the stalk of the lemon grass, and her heels as small as bird's eggs, when she ate *sirih* or drank water her face acquired an indescribable charm....." Maxwell, loc. cit.

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accusing Lakṣmaṇa of desiring to possess her if Rāma died in the pursuit of the golden deer.

The Search for Sītā

The search for Sītā takes on very curious turns. In the Maranao version, Radia Mangandiri dreamt that his testicle, gored out by a caraboa, was thrown east where potre Langawi, Queen of the East, swallowed it. This made her pregnant and soon she gave birth to a monkey son. When Mangandiri awakened, he found out that his testicle was missing and thought that his dream might have been true. Indeed his dream was true; he really had begotten a monkey son named Lakṣmaṇa.

Lakṣmaṇa meanwhile, left home in search of his father. One day he met Mangandiri and Mangawarna who were planning to rescue Malaila Ganding. Addressing Mangandiri as father and Mangawarna as uncle (which surprised the brothers) he offered help assuring them of weapons and soldiers. To get Pulu Bandiarmasir, Lawana's kingdom, Lakṣmaṇa catapulted from Mangandiri's palm and made across the sea a rattan causeway.

While crossing the causeway, they lost their balance and fell into the sea, where there were crocodiles. Lakṣmaṇa battled and defeated them. Now the crocodiles promised aid by battling Lawana's men who would run to the sea for safety.

At Lawana's Palace, Mangandiri, Mangawarna and Lakṣmaṇa saw that whenever Lawana approached Malaila Ganding, a barrier of fire appeared. Lakṣmaṇa explained that such a phenomenon occurred because Malaila Ganding was abducted from Mangandiri. A betel chew was then prepared and exchanged between the royal couple. The Lakṣmaṇa brought back Malaila Ganding to Mangandiri.

Soon the battle began and Lawana fought by turns Mangandiri and Mangawarna. Still, he could not be wounded. Just then Lakṣmaṇa seized Mangandir's kamipilan, sharpened it on the whetstone set upon a naga (wood) (for it was prophesied that any weapon sharpened on it would cause Lawana's

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downfall) and gave it to Mangawarna. Mangawarna wounded Lawana and this ended the battle.

In the *Fairy Tale*, Sri Rāma asked for his son Kra Kechil a monkey prince, to help in the search. The prince agreed to help—only if Sri Rāma would, for once, eat a meal with him from the same leaf, and let him sleep in his father's arms. Sri Rāma agreed. The monkey prince then jumped from his father's shoulder to Pulu Kachapuri. He landed on an island, but through the side of a jinn he finally landed on Kachapuri. There, Kra Kechil and his mother Sakutum, recognized each other through the ring that the monkey prince had slipped into a water jar. Then he destroyed Duwana's favourite trees—a coconut tree and a mango tree. Infuriated, Doutwana ordered his army to subdue the monkey prince. But nothing could hurt the prince. After a seven day truce, the battle continued and Kra Kechil was finally caught. He instructed his captors to swathe him in cloth soaked in oil and to set it on fire. This done, he jumped about the palace, setting it on fire.

Hanumān's adventures in the *Rāmāyaṇa, HMR* and *HSR* are those of Kra Kechil (*FT*) and of Lakṣmaṇa in the *Maharadia Lawana*. The meeting between mother and son in the HSR is not quite represented in *Maharadia Lawana* because the son (Lakṣmaṇa) in *Maharadia Lawana* is actually step-son whom she had not seen. Hence, there merely was Lakṣmaṇa identifying himself, just as Hanumān did in *Rāmāyaṇa* (To identify himself, Hanumān used rings—a motif found in varied forms in all versions, except *Maharadia Lawana*).

In the *HSR*, there is no evidence of these developments, although the meeting between mother and son is shown. Kra Kechil's appearance in monkey form before his mother is perhaps an echo of Hanumān's appearance before Sītā in the Asoka groove of Rāvaṇa in *Rāmāyaṇa*. Hanumān in *HSR* appeared first as a Brahman before Sītā Dewi, but in *HMR*, he took first the form of an old woman. The magic car motif appears in *Rāmāyaṇa*; in *HSR*, and *HMR*, it is a flying chariot.

The Jaṭāyu-Rāvaṇa combat in *Rāmāyaṇa* is not found in the *Fairy Tale*. The Duwana Kra Kechil combat in the *Fairy Tale*

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is not found in the other versions. But the burning of Kachapuri has a descriptive counterpart in *Rāmāyaṇa*, *HSR/HMR*, although again interesting accretions and developments are found in the *Fairy Tale*. In *Rāmāyaṇa* and *HMR*, Hanumān's tail was swathed in cloth soaked in oil (petroleum, *minyak tanah*) and bestrewn with saltpeter (*sendawan*). In *HSR*, he was bandaged all over, but he grew and grew until there was no more cloth left with which to wrap him. His wrap was then set to fire and Hanumān leapt over the roof and set the palace on fire. No bodily expansion of the monkey son takes place in the Fairy Tale nor in the *Maharadia Lawana.* There seems, therefore, to be no significantly sustained nourishment of the literature, either due to political changes in the area, or to a misreading of the motif by the borrowers who belong to a different socio-cultural mould.

The Return of Sītā

The return of Malaila Ganding in *Maharadia Lawana* is not as dramatic as that found in other versions. In *Maharadia Lawana,* there is no trace of Kra Kechil's carrying Sītā Dewi (*FT*) nor of Sītā's use of a flying car or chariot in her return (*Rāmāyaṇa*). Moreover, there is no fire ordeal to purify Malaila Ganding from her "contact" with Maharadia Lawana but there is a fire barrier, which is reminiscent of the fire purification of *Rāmāyaṇa.*

Details of the return of the princess as found in *Maharadia Lawana* and the *Fairy Tale* are presented here for comparison. These will further show the various interesting aspects of the Maranao story in relation to the Southeast Asian versions.

In *Maharadia Lawana*, Radia Mangandiri returned home to Agama Niog after his victory over Lawana. His escorts— the crocodiles that created waves and the caraboas whose footsteps made the earth tremble—created fear among his people. But Lakṣmaṇa told the people that it was Mangandiri who had returned from long journey. The people then gave him a joyous welcome. Lakṣmaṇa meanwhile metamorphosed into a handsome datu.

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In the *Fairy Tale,* Sakutum's return to Tanjong Bunga was marked with rejoicing and feasting, but the celebration was shortlived; Duwana came to avenge his defeat at Kachapuri. In the ensuing battle, Lakṣmaṇa was killed but was immediately brought back to life by a powerful remedy that Kra Kechil had brought from Mount Enggil-ber Enggil. In defeat, Duwana left. Afterwards, Sri Rāma and Sakutum acknowledge Kra Kechil as their son and heir.

Whereas Sītā's return in *Rāmāyaṇa* agrees with the return of Sītā Dewi in *HSR* and of Sītā in *HMR*, Sakutum's *Rāmāyaṇa* Rāma brought Sītā home in the magic car of Kubera, the god of wealth. In the *Fairy Tale*, Kra Kechil brought home his mother Sakutum. No magic car of flying chariot which is not mentioned in *HSR/HMR* is used.

Perhaps in the *Fairy Tale*, the fire ordeal to purify the heroine was not necessary. Sakutum, who was taken back by her own son, was consanguinally related to Duwana. Therefore no chastity test and purification ceremonies were necessary. In *HSR/HMR* and *Rāmāyaṇa* is no clue to Duwana's invasion of Tanjong Bunga and to Śrī Rāma and Sakutum's recognition of Kra Kechil as their son but there is Lakṣmaṇa's death and resurrection.

Rāvaṇa

Rāvaṇa's position in *Maharadia Lawana* shows a very important link with the *HSR/HMR*. The Maranao version opens with a description of Lawana who had eight heads (seven heads, in Par. 61, 65 and 73 Text and Translation). He was said to have caused the death of many a man in the realm because of his vile tongue; he intrigued. To punish him, he was exiled to Pulu Nagara where he one day burned leaves and wood and from a tree cried that world was chained. Diabaril (Angel Gabriel) reported it to the Lord (Tuhen) who told him to ask Lawana not to sacrifice himself because nothing could cause Lawana's death, except a tool (knife, sword etc.) that would be sharpened on a whetstone in the palace of Pulu Bandiarmasir.

The *HMR* commences with Rāvaṇa's genealogy followed by his banishment for being unruly and for posing a danger to his sire's dynasty. In Langkapura, Rāvaṇa practiced austerities,

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collected firewood during the day and at night slept hanging head down over the fire. After 12 years, Allah sent down Adam to find out what Rāvaṇa wanted. Rāvaṇa asked for the rule over four worlds—earth, air, water, and the nether world. He was told that his wish would be granted, provided he would anger no one. In delivering the message, Adam omitted one condition—stealing of women. Rāvaṇa agreed and thus conquered the four worlds.

Reference to Rāvaṇa's having ten heads is made when he passed through the hermitage of a great *rishi* (Sage). He became angry and then ten heads appeared.

HSR commence with a description of Rāvaṇa as a 10-headed and 20-headed *Rākṣasa* (demon). (It may be interesting to note that the *rākṣasa* motif appears only in *HSR* which tells of two *rākṣasas*—one golden, the other silver appearing before Sītā Dewi. He was banished to Bukit Serindib (later called Langkapuri) where for 12 years he performed austerities, hanging himself by the feet. The Almighty God in heaven sent his Prophet Adam and asked Rāvaṇa what he wanted. And God, informed of Rāvaṇa's desire, granted him his wish—that rule over the worlds—the earth, the heavens, the seas, and the nether world.

Rāvaṇa in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is described as having 10 heads and 20 arms. He performed austerities for conquering the four worlds. There seems to be no clue to the change in the number of Rāvaṇa's heads, from ten (*Rāmāyaṇn* and *HSR/HMR*) to eight, then seven (*L*). There is also no mention of Rāvaṇa's other hands in *Maharadia Lawana,* not even a reference to it when he fought Mangandiri and Mangawarana.

Interpolations and accretions

A number, if not all, of the interpolations and accretions in. *Maharadia Lawana* cannot be traced back to the *Fairy Tale* and *HSR/HMR*. It may be inferred that these interpolations and accretions are independent developments. Some accretions and interpolations in *HSR* and the *Fairy Tale* relative to the *Rāmāyaṇn* are not found in *Maharadia Lawana*. For instance, in the *Fairy Tale*, Sri Rāma's desire for an offspring is not distinctly shown in either *HSR* or *Rāmāyaṇa,* Although Śrī Rāma's feeling is universal, its depiction may have been derived

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from Indian custom and tradition. In another instance, Rājā Lakṣmaṇa's use of sorcery to predict the birth of Śrī Rāma's son is purely an indigenous accretion, an allusion to the art of divination practiced by Malay sorcerers.

In all four stories, the asceticism—and offshoot of Rāvaṇa's banishment—seems to be the common denominator, varied on slightly. The use of fire in the ascetic acts is patently Indian in character. The appearance of Allah and Adam and the Angel Gabriel (Diabarail) in *Maharadia Lawana* and the *HSR/HMR* may be and could be interpolations of Brahmā and Viṣṇu (gods in the Hindu Pantheon) to give the stories an Islamic character, considering that Islam, then newly introduced into the area, infused its spirit into, if not entirely superseded, the earlier overlay of the literature and other social aspects. But these developments may just well be indigenous. For instance, the importance of fire was known even in the most 'primitive' societies in the area.

An interesting aspect is Lawana's lament on the world being chained. What this means to the Maranao is not clear. But ostensibly it was to relieve the world of the sins (desires) which chained it. This concept appears to be of Buddhistic/Hinduistic orientation, considering the influence of Hindu and Buddhist teachings in the area. However, the Malay versions—the *HMR* do not seem to follow this trend. This may be explained by the fact that in Southeast Asia, there developed through the long years of encounter between Brahmanism and Buddhism a blend expressed in the Śiva-Buddha syncreticism. Explanations to these discrepancies might be found on close examination to Darangen (which still is being compiled into one volume), particularly Lawana's genealogy.

In excursions of Śrī Rāma and Sakutum in the *Fairy Tale* seem to be shades of Śrī Rāma's decision not to return to his father's country after he married Sītā Dewi. They also explain Sakutum's pregnancy. The *FT/HSR* connection is carried on to the transformation of the royal couple into monkeys—an episode found in both the *Fairy Tale* and *HSR*. The transformation explains the monkey birth of their son, which varies in this detail; In *HSR*, as well as in *HMR*, Hanumān was

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born of Sītā Dewi through Devi Añjati, whereas in the *Fairy Tale* Kra Kechil was directly born of Sakutum. In *Maharadia Lawana,* the monkey birth of Lakṣmaṇa is not in any way explained. Lakṣmaṇa's queries on his birth connote concern about incest, a taboo in Maranao society and also reflect the Maranao's inherent interest in genealogy.

In *Rāmāyaṇa,* Sītā gave birth to sons in exile; in *HSR,* Sītā Dewi gave birth to Hanumān, later to another son, Tabalawi, also in exile. These other sons are not mentioned in the *Fairy Tale* and in *Maharadia Lawana.*

What is interesting, however, is that only the *Fairy Tale* tells of the royal couple's expressed desire for an offspring, but it does not describe the ceremonies held on the son's birth which are found in other versions. The *lebis, Hajis, imams* and *Khatips* and the Koran reading in the *Fairy Tale* do not have any reference in *Rāmāyaṇa,* nor in *HSR/HMR* which were already influenced by Islamic ideas. They may be attributed to the influence of the complete Ismalization of the Malay (Perak) peoples. There are no clues to the incidents on the breaking of the news of the monkey sons' birth to Śrī Rāma and of the sending away of Kra Kechil in either the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *HSR.*

In the *Fairy Tale,* Kra Kechil was banished to a forest and after he left it, met Shah "Numān (Hanumān in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *HSR/HMR*). This episode is paralleled in *Maharadia Lawana* by Lakṣmaṇa's search for bigger food sources, Lakṣmaṇa— leaping from tree to tree—landed between his sire Mangandiri and uncle Mangawarna. This chance meeting ended Lakṣmaṇa's search for his father and cleared doubts on his origin; that is he might have been a product of an incestuous relationship between his mother and grandfather. But how he was able immediately to recognize his father and uncle is still not clear.

Sugrīva's and/or Bāli's position in *Rāmāyaṇa* appears to be that of Shah Numān (Hanumān, *HSR*) in the *Fairy Tale.* But Hanumān in *HSR* is the same as *Rāmāyaṇa's* Hanumān whose birth offers no clue to link it with Shah Numān's birth. (Shah

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Numān is described as an aged sagacious monarch in the Kingdom by the jungles and as a friend of the Sun, Mata Hari).

Shah Numān's declaration—that he already knew of the origin of Kra Kechil who is related to Śrī Rāma and Sakutum and who is his "grandchild", is very, very interesting. It will perhaps give clue to the parentage of Śrī Rāma or Sakutum. It may not be without basis to conjecture that Shah Numān might be the father of either Śrī Rāma or Sakutum, judging from his filial affection, concern and loving care for Kra Kechil.

Kra Kechil's other adventures cannot be traced back to the other epics. But since his counterpart Hanumān in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *HSR/HMR*—occupied a prominent position in the cynosure of the hero, it may be assumed that logically Kra Kechil would be a prince of all monkey tribes since the *Fairy Tale* is traceable to either or both *HSR* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. In this context it is understandable why no traces of the presence of Sugrīva and Bāli are evident in the *Maharadia Lawana*. It seems however that the roles of Sugīrva and/or Bāli, as well as those of Hanumān (*Rāmāyaṇa/HSR/HMR*) and Shah Numān (*Fairy Tale*) were taken by Lakṣmaṇa. This is evident when Lakṣmaṇa enlisted an army of carabaos and crocodiles to invade Pulu Bandiarmasir and when he stringed the rattan bridge.

Like Hanumān, Lakṣmaṇa, in the Maranao story, occupied an important position, but there is no evidence of his being a prince notwithstanding his being a son of a princess, Potre Langawi. No evidence of his kinship with the simians could be established. Perhaps an examination of the *Daragen* would clarify these points. However, Lakṣmaṇa's monkey form may be traced back to *HSR/HMR*, even further back to the *Rāmāyaṇa*—with the *Fairy Tale* as the intermediate story.

There seems no parallel in HSR to Kra Kechil's eating from one leaf with his father, Śrī Rāma, nor for his sleeping on his father's lap. (But in *HMR*, father and son ate from the same banana leaf.) There is also no parallel in *HSR* to Kra Kechil's metamorphosis into a handsome prince.

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The metamorphosis motif, however, may be explained as an influence of the folk literature[18] of the Malays.[19] But an assumption that this accretion is independent of any folk literature development cannot also be ignored because the metamorphosis motif is comparatively widespread not only in local but in all forms of folk literature.

In this context, it may readily be seen why there are no traces of Kra Kechil's eating and sleeping with his father in the *Maharadia Lawana.* However there is a parallel to Kra Kechil's Metamorphosis. Lakṣmaṇa is metamorphosed into a very handsome datu, but this motif may also be an influence of folk literature, as can be gleaned from the many metamorphosis stories in Maranao kunst and volk literature.

But here the parallel ends: whereas in *Maharadia Lawana,* the metamorphosis ends the story (no other events followed it) in the *Fairy Tale,* Kra Kechil, henceforth known as Mambang Bongsu, married the daughter of Raja Shah Kobad. The Raja abdicated his throne in favour of Kra Kechil who reigned as Raja Bandar Tawhil. These subsequent events are not found in the greater Malay text—the *HSR/HMR* or in *Rāmāyaṇa.* This is understandable. The *HSR/HMR* seem to have been resistant to the introduction of new elements and interpolations despite an

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[18] See and cf. Howard Mckaughan, 'The Inflection and Syntax of the Maranaw Verb.' Text illustration No. 2-A. 'Si Somcsang Sa Alongan ago si Ama" (Someseng of Alongan and Monkey) p. 50 *passim;* Dean S. Fansler, *Filipino* popular Tales (Lancaster, Penn. 1921) No. 19/3/4 Juan wearing a monkey skin" No. 29-"Chongita" (Little monkey Lady): and the Tinguian Tales found in Fay Cooper Cole. Traditions of Tinguians. Field Museum of Natural History Publications 180 XIV I (Chicago, 1915). Also Mary Here, Old Deccan Days. (London) 1858 No. 12 "The Jackal, The Barber etc." pp. 175, 194 Ram. I 48 : HI, 71 The *Purāṇas* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* also provide us with a number of tales that show the motif. The story of Urvaśī and Pururavas in the RV. X. 95 is another major paradigm for this motif. The motif in this story is also known as the "Swan Maiden Motif" (see Kathāsaritsāgara I) Appendix I—"Urvaśī and Pururavas", VIII Appendix I "The Swan Maiden Motif".

Furthermore see Ivor N. H. Evans, "Folk stories of the Tampasuk and Turaran Districts, British North Borneo." Journal of *the Royal Anthropological Institute, XLIII.,* 1913, *Studies in Religion, Folklore and Customs in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula.* Cambridge.

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evident attempt at their Islamisation because they are closer to the traditional story—of Indonesian origin—than to the developing literature which found its way into the folk tradition.

The probable date of *Maharadia Lawana:* The attempt to date the Maharadia Lawana in the context of its appearance in Maranao literature is indeed a perplexing one. This attempt to date the piece would be done on two levels, e.g. internal and external.

Internal evidences may constitute mostly (*a*) Islamic religious aspects, *e.g.* reference to Diabarail (Angel Gabriel) the Muslim prayer corrupted in Manarao (see par. 6, in text, and transl.); also reference to Muslim titles as *Sultan, Shah.* References to (*b*) Indian titles as potre (Sans, *putri*), Radia (San *rājā*), Maharadia (San. *maharājā*) and other Indian terms, such as manosia (San. *Manusya*), Nagara (Sans. *Nagara*), Sowara (Skt. *Svara*) and many others that would also have some bearing upon the date of the piece of literature, (*c*) The metamorphosis of Lakṣmaṇa from a monkey form to a man form.

In terms of the movement of cultures in Philippines proto-historic times, the Indian aspects of Philippine culture came earlier than the Arab. However, in the light of the *Maharadia Lawana* story, it is possible and significantly probable that both the Indian and the Arab elements seen could have reached their present setting simultaneously. More precisely, the story itself, or the theme, reached the Maranao area already complete with these elements at a period after the Islamization of the adjoining area *e.g.* Java, Sumatra, and Malaya, This date would be extended further into the period of the early incursions of the European in the area. The references to Islamic terms itself do not invalidate the view that the piece of literature has its early beginnings in pre-Islamic times and that these terms found their way into the literature as an attempt on the part of the recipients of this culture to infuse Islamic spirit into it to make it acceptable to the new institution.

The transformation of Lakṣmaṇa from a monkey aspect to a human form, may reveal that the story dates back further in time into the mythological age of Maranao folk history. The

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presence of a parallel event in a piece of literature with the same theme and plot in a different setting is evidence of its antiquity. However, such a phenomenon is also found in other tales not necessarily of the same plot and theme and in one setting alone but in other folk literary traditions.

Without referring to item (*c*)—for it shall be adverted to again subsequently,—the date of the story may now be set in the light of items (*a*) and (*b*). Considering the aspects referred to under these items, and in relation to the date of entry of Indian and Arab culture elements into the Philippines, it seems that the piece of literature may have reached its present setting sometime between the middle of the 17th century and the early 19th. The range of very significant Maranao elements in the literature is itself an indication that the story has floated in Maranao society for quite some time, and that it would have taken that long to assume an entirely Maranao character and image (see Text and Transl. for details of this reference). Between the 17th and 20th centuries is a relatively long period of adjustment to the literary traditions, in the context of its cultural milieu; hence, the result was no longer one in which the sharp distinctions between the local and the alien elements have been blurred.

As the date of the *Maharadia Lawana* has been set arbitrarily, it may be instructive to look at this date in collation with the date of the Malay *Fairy Tale* with which it is compared. The date of this *Fairy Tale* constitutes the external evidence of the *Maharadia Lawana* date. In the essay, I wrote that the date of the *Fairy Tale* shall be inferred from two points (internal as they were): "...(*a*)the presence of religious men (*Lebis, Jahis, imams, Khatibs*)[20] during the birth of the monkey son and the reading of the Koran at such an important event; (*b*) the changing of Kra Kechil Imam Tergangga's name to Mambang Bongsu after his metamorphosis.

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[20] Haji (Arabic) "pilgrim to Mecca, a title for those male or female who have made the pilgirimage." Imam (Arabic) "1, leaders g.g. the caliphs and the four muslim jurists (ibm Hangal, Hanifash, Malik and Shafi., i) 2. leader of a congregation at prayer in a mosque." Khatib (Arabic) "reader or preacher in the mosque." Liebai (Dravidian?) "pious elder, mosque official."

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Among other references to the Malay Muslim religion the presence of religious men—*lebis, hajis, imams, khatibs*—during the birth of the son certainly points to the late date of the *Fairy Tale*. Moreover, the readings from the Koran present another clue to the very late composition of this piece. These two accretions show that the tale developed during the later period of the incursions of Islam into Malay society. It may even be surmised that following a conservative number of years from the earliest conversions in Malaya, the *Fairy Tale* may be dated not earlier than the 16th century. This conservative estimate may be collated with the second internal evidence.

The changing of the monkey son's name from Kra Kechil Imam Tergangga to Mambang Bongsu after his metamorphosis to man's form is significant in the historial development of Malay literature. This phenomenon in Malay literature, while it may not be recurrent in the *Fairy Tale*, seems to reveal a character trait of the Panji tales—that is the hero in the course of his adventures changes his name in almost every important episode in the Story.[21] The Panji Tales are not indigenous in Malay literature. According to R. M. Ng Dr. Poerbhatjaraka[22], the Panji Tales may have first appeared in 1222-1292, the Singhasari period of Javanese history. But Winsted[23] believes that the cycle appeared during the early Majapahit period, C 1350 A.D. and that the cycle was introduced in Malacca in the middle of the 5th century A.D.[24] Another hundred years or more may have elapsed before the cycle reached the interiors of the Malay Peninsula.

If the phenomenon in the Malay story was borrowed from the Panji Tales, it shows that it was yet in the early years of the introduction of the tales, owing perhaps to the occurrence of only one instance in the Malay tale.

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21 See R.O. Winstedt, "The Panji Tales" JRAS-MB XIX 2 (October 1941) p. 235 for an illustration of this tale character trait. See furthermore R.O.Winstedt, "A Panji Tale from Kelantan." JRAS-MB XXIII (March 1949), pp. 53-60.

22 Cited in Winstedt, *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

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The Panji Tales had already picked up influences of the Islamic faith, the date of whose introduction in Java is towards the middle of the 14th century A.D.; perhaps the end of the 16th century A.D. or even later may therefore be taken as a *terminus a quo* for the composition of the Rāma Fairy Tale.

The *Maharadia Lawana* would have appeared in Maranao literary milieu at the date set for it (17-19th Centuries). For as the date of the *Fairy Tale* has a significant bearing upon that of the *Maharadia Lawana*, it becomes equally important to the whole Maranao literary tradition. This is particularly so in relation to the Darangen, which belongs to the classical period of Maranao literature, for it belongs to a date relatively earlier considering the language of the folk epic and the many cultural elements that no longer persist in present Maranao society.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA TRADITION IN KANNADA

By **V. SITARAMIAH**

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are the most cherished poetic possessions of the Hindus. According to tradition, the *Rāmāyaṇa* story deals with an earlier Avatāra of Viṣṇu while the *Mahābhārata* deals with a later. Possibly, the *Mahābhārata* as work,—at least in the Jaya or the Bhārata version (as against the final *Mahābhārata* form)—could be anterior. We are not on certain ground yet as to which work came earlier. In the *Mahābhārata*, we have a version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. But in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* there is no mention of the *Mahābhārata* heroes. When I speak of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, I speak of the Vālmīki's and not the later versions or extensions or transformations of the story, like the Adhyātma or the Ānanda and the Adbhuta types. To many scholars and devotees of the Rāmāyaṇa, it is an Avatāra Kathā. Some highly intellectual people speak of its hero as the Lord or Bhagavān Sri Rāmachandra. In what may be deemed the essential *Rāmāyaṇa,* he is not referred to as Viṣṇu at all; but as Viṣṇur-*iva*, Viṣṇu-*sadṛśa, Deva-kalpam* etc. If we give credence to the Nārada episode, in the beginning of the present version, the question asked is who among men (*i.e.* the kings among men) alive is an ideal person indicating qualities; 'Nara' is the operative word. Lakṣmaṇa does not know him as more than an excellent human being. Even when victory is won against Rāvaṇa and Sītā is being accepted after the fire ordeal, the answer Rāma gives to Brahmā etc. who ascribe to him Viṣṇutva, is that he does not know anything else about himself, than that he is a human being, son of King Daśaratha. A little earlier when he meets Sītā after the victory, he tells her that he did not exercise himself for her sake but to re-establish the fair name of a Kṣatriya King of the Ikṣvāku line. The line 'Daiva-sampādito doṣaḥ pauruṣeṇa mayā jitah' must clinch the issue.

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The second and the third strands deal with a Ṛṣi-purposc and the purpose of the Gods who feel that the world has to be delivered from the violence of and thraldom to which they are exposed by Rāvaṇa, the Rākṣasa. Very skilfully these two other strands are woven into the fabric and made coherent with the main story. In later times Rāma had become God; other stories and adventures and myths began to hang round him. Every part of the country between Kekaya in North-west to the South in India likes to relate itself to him. There are interstitial fields into which other fantasies and popular fancy get in to disturb and distort the greatness and fundamental human worth of the main story.

The general hold of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story on the largest number of people was used by sects of religion like Jainism, the Jātaka stories of the Buddha, though even here questions are raised about the priority of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. The Hindu writers have made capital out of it for philosophical or other reasons; the Jains for propaganda purposes; Viṣṇu Pāramaya in two different ways try to extend their influence. But one fact that shows up invariably in the Jaina version—at least in the Kannada country—is that the Jaina-kathās are an attempt at a rational reinterpretation of the Vālmīki version, making all the Vānaras and the Rākṣasas as Vidyādharas and Jains. A lot of refinement goes into this making of the Jaina-kathā where it is part of a Purāṇa and Rāma is Rāmabhaṭṭāraka. He is, in the calender of their 63 Śalākā Puruṣas, a Baladeva born in the final—(Carama) human form before attaining to Siddhi with Lakṣmaṇa as Vāsudeva still not ripe for Siddhi. Rāma is a contemporary of Suvrata, the 20th Jina, even as he is Kṛṣṇa in the later Neminātha (22nd) Jina story. That is how Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are assigned lives and achievement. Of the 24 Tīrthaṅkaras beginning with Ādinātha and ending with Mahāvīra (6th century B.C.), these two belong to the later among the line of Tīrthaṅkaras. Only Mahāvīra and Pārśva belong to an historical period. We are not certain of the periods of nearly 22 others among them.

In the Kannada country, we have both the Vālmīki and other versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, notably the Jaina version. Until

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the 14th-15th Centuries, no great poetic work bearing on the entire orthodox story is available. These other works are intrinsically of less literary and substantive worth[1] until we come to the modern period. Only that part of the story—perhaps not authentic in the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* itself, the 7th Kāṇḍa—is treated again and again, namely the Sītā Vanavāsa story. In Lakṣmīsa's Jaimini Bhārata, it is an inset; a prose work about the close of the 19th Cent. called the Rāmāśvamedha, deals with the same moving episode of the abandonment of Sītā to her fate. What is not contained even in the 7th Kāṇḍa, the fight between the little sons of Rāma and the Rāma army, is detailed, though the ordeal to which Sītā is subjected to again gets mention in both. In our time, perhaps the most outstanding poet Prof. K. V. Puttappa Kuvempu has written a vision in "Epic Verse"—a kind of the English Blank Verse—called the 'Śrī Rāmāyaṇa Darśana' which has won awards in Karnataka and in All India, the awards of the Sahitya Akademi and the Jnānapīth. Recently, another illustrious poet, Dr. Masti Venkateśa Iyengar, has given us a version of the full *Rāmāyaṇa* story in his *Śrī Rāma Paṭṭābhiṣeka*.

From 15-16th centuries onwards, a form of literature and dance known as Yakṣagāna has used different episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* for dramatic presentation with song and dance. Musical and Harikathā recitals are based on either single or a series of the Rāmāvatāra Kathās. In popular song and folklore of many kinds, the Kathā has fared variously, full of colour, Bhakti or entertainment at each serious stage adding a fancy extension which later is incorporated into the main story. So is it in folk literature and in narrative songs current among the women folk. What is most popular in this part of the country, as also in other parts, is the daily *Pārāyaṇa* of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Srimad Rāmāyaṇa* as it is referred to. It is an act of

[1] The Ranganatha, the Adbhuta and the Ananda versions are full of fancy and much distortion and translation of Rāmāyaṇa episodes of Sanskṛt and Prākṛt works. I shall speak of Narahari's and Venkamatya's works a little later.

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piety. At the end of such *Pārāyaṇa*, there is a celebration ending in the Rāma Paṭṭābhiṣeka and feeding of guests. In Dasara, this *Pārāyaṇa* completes within a span of nine days and on the Vijaya Daśamī day, a great celebration of the Paṭṭābhiṣeka is undertaken. The bright Navamī day in Caitra each year, the day of Rāma's birth, is celebrated in every home among the Brahmins. Weeks and fortnights are devoted to recitals and other cultural activities at this time.

No Rāma Kathā of importance has come to us before Nāgacandra's time *i.e,* the second half of 12th Cent. who writes his *Rāmāyaṇa* in the Jaina Purāṇa style. Naturally, the story gets coloured and shaped by Jaina predictions and purpose. There were Prākṛt and Samskṛt works dealing with the Rāma-kathā before him: Vimalasūri's *Paumacariya* (Padma-carita) in Prākṛt and Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa* in Samskṛt.[2] Nāgacandra seems to derive the bulk of his substance from Vimalasūri though a Samskṛt work by Raviṣena called *Padma Purāṇa* (published) had come up a little before. Vimalasūri belonged to C. 4th Cent. A.D. and Raviṣeṇa to C. 10th Cent. A.D. Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa* has a successor in a Prākṛt work *Triṣaṣṭi Mahāpuruṣa Guṇālankāra*, written by a Puṣpadanta.[3] This needs to be mentioned because a work about the 10th Cent. in Kannada by Cāvuṇḍarāya is said to deal with all the Tīrthaṅkaras and has the Rāmakathā.[4] But Nāgacandra, and, an important poet called Kumudendu later, wrote in the *ṣaṭpadi* style following Vimalasūri and Raviṣeṇa. So that the *Paumacariya* seems to have influenced both.

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2 From Vimalasūri's work, quite a number of Jain Prākṛt, Samskṛt and Kannada works took material and inspiration.

3 I owe much of my information to my late friend Dr. D. L. Narasimhachar, to Dr. A. N. Upadhye, and to Winternitz whose work has been of importance for a long time now.

4 That version seems to take more from Guṇabhadra and from him to a work called Puṇyāsrava in Samskṛt seems to have influenced a later work in Kannada, by Nāgarāja.

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One feature which distinguishes the Jaina tradition is the adapation of the popular *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* story.[5] It is however said that the first Tīrthaṅkara mentioned the story of Rāma and narrated it to his son the Emperor Bharata with the future 23 Tīrthaṅkara accounts he gave. But since the *Rāma-kathā* definitely belongs to Jina Suvrata, credence to that may be taken merely as a prophecy of future events. What is beyond the ken of a Tīrthaṅkara? A question seems to have been raised by king Śreṇīka when he asks the Gaṇadhara Gautama, the chief expounder of Mahāvīra's doctrine, as to how Hanumān, Sugrīva etc. could be monkeys and Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and others monsters eating human flesh and drinking blood and how Kumbhakarṇa could sleep for months at a stretch and so on. Gautama seems to have set his mind at rest saying that they are distortions of truth by Kumatis *i.e.*, wrong headed ones. They are all Vidyādharas of Jaina persuasion. This interpretation becomes first class quarry for Vimalasūri etc. who built their *Rāmakathā* as a reformed, rationalized version according to them, of the Rākṣasa and Vānara sections.

Paumacariya is an elaborate work where Rāvaṇa is a mighty and illustrious king and Hanumān a relation of his. The story is narrated as illustration of his life of the Jaina Karmabandha Kathā where Rāvaṇa is a Prati-Vāsudeva, doomed to be killed by Vāsudeva, *i.e.*, Lakṣmaṇa. Rāma in this birth should not be guilty of killing; so that it is not Rāma who kills Rāvaṇa but Lakṣmaṇa. In this tradition, the final flare-up seems

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[5] The Buddhist Daśaratha Jātaka and some Jain versions offer different versions of the Sītā story. In the earlier, Sītā is the daughter of Maṇḍodarī who on occurrence of omens at the birth of the daughter, packs the child into a box and directs Mārīca to throw it as far away as possible. Mārīca takes it to a garden near the capital of Mithilā. The child was later picked up by Janaka, alive, when he was getting a piece of sacrifical land ploughed and adopted it. An Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa version makes Maṇḍodarī carry it to Kurukshetra when she went on a pilgrimage, to be rid of this child who was born to her without Rāvaṇa's knowledge, having drunk the blood of Ṛṣis innocently! The other story seems to contain a version that Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā were brothers and Sister, born of Daśaratha by a favourite among the thousands of women he had in his harem. Not much of the Rāvaṇa story is said to be found in Daśaratha Jātaka. Much of a different kind is in the Jaina Kathā.

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to light up Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa in fury, with blood-shot eyes and rancour born of many previous Bhavas (Births). The story is rounded off with the final redemption of Rāma Bhaṭṭāraka as Nāgacandra designates him. After death, Lakṣmaṇa goes into a hell! Something to be swallowed by the orthodox Hindu mind!

An early foretelling of the death of Rāvaṇa is narrated by Nārada to Daśaratha and Janaka with a stanza that Rāvaṇa will die at the hands of Daśaratha's son on account of Jānakī. Thus Rāvaṇa's destiny is pre-determined. Vibhīṣaṇa who heard this doom-in love of his elder brother—arranged an assassination of the parents, quite before (!) the birth of Rāma and Sītā. When assassins are sent, the parents will have left their cities and two figures made in lac were installed instead. The lac heads were cut off by mistake. Vibhīṣaṇa felt relieved. Fate thus frustrates the effort. The ascription of ten heads to Rāvaṇa is said to be due to the beautiful reflections of his face and head in a piece of jewellery worn by little Rāvaṇa. Many are the adventures of Rāvaṇa as he wins victory over Gods and men, braving the thunderbolt of Indra and the Cakra of Viṣṇu himself. He has robbed his brother Kubera—Vaiśravaṇa—of his Puṣpaka and made it his own. Many again are the women whom he has either captured or who are gifts to him or who offer themselves on their own in love of him; they are countless. Information given directly or obliquely in cryptic bits—in the first 6 Kāṇḍas of Vālmīki and elaborated in the 7th—are given a twist and turn. When Rāvaṇa demanded the hand of Vāli's sister Śriprabhā, Vāli is unwilling to hand her over to an Unmārgī-violator of the right and instead of handing her over, he retires to Tapas. Vāli performing a Tapas is almost a transformation of the story of the Śiva-Pārvatī and Kailāsa. By pressing a toe Vāli disables Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa is made to feel inferior, he howls in pain and gets his name Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa feels that this frustration is due to revenge by Vāli on him. Sugrīva, however, hands her over to him in marriage. It is not Hanumān that arranges the meeting and friendship between Sugrīva and the Rāghava Brothers. Hanumān hears that a feat of supernatural power is performed by Lakṣmaṇa and is persuaded to join sides

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with Rāma and Sugrīva. To prove his power, Lakṣmaṇa raises the Siddha Śila. Jāmbavān narrates the history of Rāvaṇa and gives an estimate of his might and achievements. Only the one who has gained the sword Śūryahāsa will be able to kill Rāvaṇa, it is said, and Lakṣmaṇa does it. Śūrpanakhā, the only sister of Rāvaṇa, is the wife of Khara. Her name here is Candranakhā.[6] Śambūka—who comes only in the Uttarakāṇḍa in Vālmīki in a not very glorious event in the later life of Rāma—is the son of Candranakhī, performing tapas for gaining a miracle sword. Quite casually, Lakṣmaṇa moves about a grove of trees where a mighty advent of the celestials waited expecting young Śambūka getting the sword. When Lakṣmaṇa seizes hold of it, it gets aptly into his hands. Lakṣmaṇa, to test its edge, swings it. A whole Bamboo cluster is cut off and the head of the young man gets chopped with it. The mother comes to the scene only to see the bloody effect and moves out angrily swearing vengeanace on the killer. And, as in Vālmīki, she falls in love with the Brothers to share the fate she does there. Khara is roused to punish the wrong-doer and fails. She then appeals to Rāvaṇa and describes to her brother, luscious, insatiate and amorous as ever, the surpassing beauty of Sītā.[7] Rāvaṇa lays a plot to carry off Sītā. The description of how Rāvaṇa was fascinated by the beauty of Sītā is described. A small change shows up here; it is Lakṣmaṇa that pursues the stag. 'When Rāvaṇa has referred to a power he had, as to how to separate the Brothers, Mārīca disapproves the act but is helpless to prevent it. Candranakhā tells him that there is an understanding between the brothers that Rāma would go to protect Lakṣmaṇa when he cries out in need; and that happens here. We are thus saved from the accusations of Sītā of Lakṣmaṇa in Vālmīki and the misery of poor Lakṣmaṇa.

Many are the shifts in other episodes. But one feature that marks Rāvaṇa's prowess consists of his magnanimous handing over the kingdoms he won in war against even those deemed invincible. Episodes of Kārtavīrya and Indra illustrate it. Another

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6 Nagacandra shifts the narration in the Jaina Purāṇas from the beginning to this later stage.

7 A smile on the lips of Sītā on Candranakhā's overtures insults her.

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kind is the story of Uparambhā, wife of Naḷakūbara, who, in heart has yearning for Rāvaṇa, was married against her wishes. When Rāvaṇa laid seige against her husband's capital, Durlanghyapura as it is called, and was desperate about its reduction, Uparambhā helps him by turning treacherous to her husband and reveals to him the secret.[8]

In the contest of the achievement Uparambhā is told that it is not proper for a chaste and a goodly wife to become unfaithful to her Lord and that in addition he deems, her now indirectly his Guru; The woman fails on both counts. He cannot accept her even when she declares her passion for him. Another point as well: He was under a vow at the feet of the Saint Anantavīrya Kevalin according to which he could not touch an unwilling woman or the wife of another. A hundred things like these crowd the career of Rāvaṇa. Mandodarī is so loyal that she undertakes the task of appealing to and pursuading Sītā; but a Kulānganā like her should not disgrace herself with such talk. That is how she is upbraided by Sītā.

Throughout the story, Lakṣmaṇa has happy and successful adventures, at the end of all of which hundreds of beautiful damsels become his. What is surprising is that Rāma himself agrees to take the hand of some 12 daughters of Sugrīva.[9] Hanumān is married and is a relation of Rāvaṇa. What can prevent the Vidyādharas having a number of women? On the battlefield when Lakṣmaṇa lies unconscious and like dead, information is received that if a young lady, Viśalyasundarī, is brought from Bharata's place and she sprinkles water, he will revive. Quickly message is despatched and the lady herself comes to do this. She has been destined to be Lakṣmaṇa's; a queer incident rather hard to hear and read. Desperately Rāvaṇa makes one last bid to achieve aid from a Bahurūpiṇī Vidyā and offers worship at the shrine of Śāntinātha. Commands are issued that nobody should disturb him at devotion. Rāma is totally unwilling to accede to the request of the others. But Aṅgada, Lakṣmaṇa and the others disturb the penance; some vānaras pull

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8 She and her maid arrive at Rāvaṇa's camp and declare love to him and she squeals the secret of reducing the city.

9 There is an episode like that of Ratnāvalī when a love-lorn girl in an effort to hang herself because of her desparate love for Lakṣmaṇa, is discovered and is saved by him.

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the hair of his women, even of Mandodarī and other wives; none is spared; unbearable humiliation and mockery are heaped on him. Their appeal to him is piteous naturally. Yet no one could distrub him, till he wins the power. But alas! The power says it will destroy everybody else but Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa! Everyday, Rāvaṇa's desire for Sītā grows deeper; threats, promises and intrigues are of no avail. It blazes into a bigger flame beyond control. A final resolution in her tells him directly that she will not think of any but Rāma and she will not be alive if he be dead. This is the last straw.

At this point a great conversion takes place in him. He feels profoundly sad that a warrior like him, blessed with so much manly and heroic achievements, has not been able to measure up to the cleanliness and dignity of a simple woman and he decides to forswear all thought of possessing her. This moment has been described worthily. While everyone has asked him to surrender Sītā and he himself had earlier thought of it to obtain the release of Indrajit and Kumbhakarṇa from enemy power he decides to hand her over now; but he desires to fight to the last, and instead of killing Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa he will capture them, take them home as guests and offer Rāma back his wife. Rāma does not kill, not because he can't, but will not. Lakṣmaṇa confronts Rāvaṇa and the use of the supreme weapon, which is in Rāvaṇa's hands and hurled against Lakṣmaṇa, burns up all on its way but reverently goes ground Lakṣmaṇa and stands at his right shoulder. Rāvaṇa fights undaunted when his own weapon is used against him.

After the lamentations and remorse of Vibhīṣaṇa himself Rāma goes to them and consoles them on the Fate of all earthly existence. Almost at this point Indrajit and Kumbhakarṇa come on the scene, and see how magnanimous and gracious Rāma is. After the victory Sītā is released and the conquering heroes enter Laṅkā as friends. Rāma is treated to festivity and celebration. It requires Nārada to fly from Ayodhyā to this place to tell Rāma how Kausalyā (Aparājitā here, the eldest of the 4, not 3, wives of Daśaratha), is pining for the return of her son.[10]

[10] A contrast to Vālmīki who will not let Rāma slay a moment longer at Laṅkā when he has to rush back to Bharata.

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They all return and the installation of Rāma on the throne is completed.

One final episode connected with Rāma and Sītā: It is not Vālmīki that gives her aid but a fellow Jain prince who aids her at childbirth and Vajrajangha the rescuer brings her to the Aśvamedha sacrifice, where Sītā is asked to declare in open assembly that she is pure and faithful. The children are accepted. Rāma says he continues to have the same love and regard for Sītā; only for Lokapratyaya she is asked to cleanse herself through fire. She gets into the fire all right. But the conclusion is different. When Rāma offers her position back she begs of him to permit her to take to penance; she is tired of Samsāra. She clips her rich flowing hair in the open assembly and becomes a Kanti. A sad scene in the orthodox Hindu eyes but the Jaina religion accepts it. The end of Rāma himself is described with the propriety due to a Purāna. This will indicate a few of the changes in the Jaina Rāmakathā, one presented as acceptable truth that this work is not *Rāmāyaṇa* but *Rāmachandra-carita Purāṇa*. Both the literary and religious traits of the story are given weight. Many things in the longer *Paumacariya* and the Raviṣeṇa's Samskṛt work are adapted, cut and differently organised to suit the literary purpose in Kannada. Even these versions seem edited by Nāgacandra.

But what stands out is the life story of Rāvaṇa, who is almost made a tragic character. He was a wilful, reckless person engaged in a conquest of the world but under a vow not to molest a properly married and unwilling woman. The tragic and fatal flaw in his character was however his consuming desire to have Sītā. The prescription for a tragedy is all here and the Jaina concept of power, penance, and conversion find illustration in his life: the overpowering might of Karma which pursues from one birth to another makes his life as Prati-Vāsudeva inexorable and inevitably drives him to his end.

The only other important work of the Jaina version of *Rāmāyaṇa* is Kumudendu's. It fairly follows Nāgacandra's and there is nothing intrinsically great or significant about it except his use of a different metre in Saṭpadī form and the use of a couplet series called the Ragale; rather unusual. The version that is given in the work of Cāvuṇḍarāya (C. 20th Cent. and

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therefore earlier than Nagacandra) belongs to the other drearier Guṇabhadra version and need not be gone into.

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There are not many works of outstanding merit following Vālmīki. A poet Narahari (C. 1500-1600) wrote the *Rāmakathā* in Satpadī. Of the 112 Cantos of this work the latter 55 are taken up by the Yuddha Kāṇḍa. By this time the *Avatāra Kathā* has been well established, and no bones are made in saying that Rāma is aware of his being a Viṣṇu incarnation and practically all that Rāma does is a Līlā, play in the form of a man. Manthurā is not merely a hunchbacked servant and nurse to Kaikeyī; she is almost Māyā whose purpoṣe is advancing the divine purpose. She seems to have glimpsed the divine purpose of the destruction of Rāvaṇa by Rāma. She goes to her mistress Kaikeyī with the view to prevail upon Daśaratha to send Rāma into the forest, so as to be able to kill Rāvaṇa. This *Torave Rāmāyaṇa* as it is called is almost like a Prāṇa. The poet begins in the court of Śiva where Gaurī requests Śiva to describe to her the greatness and the glory of Viṣṇu. She is 'Vāsudeva stuti pārāyaṇa'. Śiva vouchasafes to her the quality of the 'Parātparavastu 'and among the thousand names of that deity it is hard to realise the essence of Vāsudeva. But the name of Rāma is said to embody all the features of Viṣṇu. Vālmīki was really the tenth son of Pracetas under penance to redeem himself from the curse of Ṛṛi Bharadvāja, This Vālmīki distinguished himself later on and composed *Rāmāyaṇa* and taught the twin children of Rāma and Sītā the poem he had composed. This poem is therefore like the one narrated by Kuśa and Lava. The children prayed to Vālmīki to tell them who their father was and what the story of his life was. The main features of the story are like those in Vālmīki and the poetical quality of the composition passes for middling merit; it lacks the insight and the sensitiveness that marks the original. Great episodes where emotion and situation need dwelling on and live presentation due, are just simply narrated or dismissed in a stanza or two. There is a Svayamvara for Sītā at which the

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Lords of Gods and men are present. Rāvaṇa himself tries to bend the Śiva bow, fails and gets back to Laṅkā in dudgeon. This event incidentally must have given him the first glimpse of the beauty of Sītā, which later developes into a consuming passion and works his destruction,—the task for which Rāma was born though there is no indication of or reference to it in the work. With Rāma coming back to Ayodhyā and getting established on the throne, the poet ends the poem.

* * *

A number of episodes are taken up meanwhile by poets and prose writers and playwrights who, finding the episodes interesting, developed them into fine bits of poetry and prose. Lakṣmīśa (15-16 Cent.) puts in the 'Śeṣarāmāyaṇa kathā' as an interlude in his rendering of the Jaimini Bhārata. It deals with how on hearing the scandalous remark of a washerman, Rāma decides to send Sītā into the forest.[11] Lakṣmaṇa takes her into deep forest to leave her in a place not far from the hermitage of Vālmīki. Vālmīki discovers her there sorrowing and takes her into the hermitage and helps her to safe delivery of the twin children whom he names Lava and Kuśa. They grow up well-versed in the Humanities and the Military Arts and are taught the *Rāmāyaṇa* poem which the Ṛṣi has composed. The two children[12] see the Aśvamedha horse as young warriors, fight and win. Sītā is sent for; Rāma accepts her into her earlier status as queen and wife. How Rāma decides to exile Sītā is fairly dramatical, without Sītā being told she is being abandoned until Lakṣmaṇa takes her into a dense forest where neither hermitage nor the chant of Mantras nor the smoke of sacred fire-offerings

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[11] The most astonishing point in the original Jaimini version itself is Rāma's saying that he will give up Sītā like generous Karṇa did always by nature! Funny, seeing that Karṇa is of another, later age! What was then the date of Jaimini's Bhārata ?

[12] The episode of a fight between the parents and children is not part of the Uttarakāṇḍa in Vālmīki but seems to have become part of popular legend which is accommodated into *Mahābhārata* like the fight between Arjuna and Babhruvahana—protagonists in an episode in the Aśvamedha Yāga of the *Mahābhārata*.

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is descried and on a question why she was brought into such a fearsome forest, Lakṣmaṇa tells her the truth and asks her to move from there as she pleased. The sorrow of the situation is deeply moving and real.[13]

Here are other details :

Between 16 and 17th centuries[14], there are two significant works on the full *Rāmāyaṇa* in the "aṭpadī verse again. One by Veṅkamātya and the other by Battaleśvara. The latter work is known popularly in the Kannada Districts as *Kauśika Rāmāyaṇa*. Veṅkamātya's work is an accomplished piece of writing. He observes the principles of composition which the conventions of Poetics prescribed for quality of achievement though like any "aṭpadī work of the later periods it shows laxness in the use of language. The poet is sure[15] that Rāma is Parabrahma. Rāma is aware of it. Vasiṣṭha is allowed to know this. Rāma is conscious of the purpose of his incarnation. About the time of the offer of Yauvarājya to Rāma, Nārada is sent by the Gods to remind him of this purpose. Rāma is not anxious at all. He knows what is going to happen. Such notice robs the story of all naturalness and takes way from the work the sense of drama, the significance of Rāma's acceptance of Kaikeyī's demands and the later feelings and utterance of the hero would sound fulsome and extravagant and if this point is remembered

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[13] Twins born with the aid provided by Vālmīki, are brought up tenderly initiated into rites belonging to Kṣatriyas and taught not only the arts of war but to read, write and sing. It soon happens that Rāma proposes to perform the Aśvamedha and the horse comes strongly guarded by a great army. The younger boy is provoked on reading the inscription tied to the forehead of the horse claiming Rāma as sovereign Lord of the land and challenging all obstructors. There is a fight and Lava is taken prisoner but the elder brother hears of it and moves into the scene and lays low the entire army. Vālmīki has been out on a visit to Pātāla. When news is brought to him that a fight was on and won, he returns without delay and speaks to Rāma of his own twin children by Sītā. After proper explanations Sītā is persuaded to go to participate in the Aśvamedha. A more positive turn is thus given to the Uttarakāṇḍa story with the addition of the episode of the parent and children at war and Sītā restored to her rightful place.

[14] The author is aware of Padma Purāṇa, Skanda and other works. To give an example of the bulk of the work, the Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa contains some 36 sections of 1684 stanzas and the Kiṣkindhā 20 sections of 864, a length of nearly 15,000 lines.

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the events cannot make as fresh and forceful an impact as literature. Nārada's conversation with Rāma is open to Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa also. And Sītā herself is Pārvatī. The opening passages speak of the story as being narrated by Śiva to Pārvatī and it is intriguing to speculate on how Sītā as Pārvatī should be feeling about it all. The Gods play a more definite part in Ayodhyā. Mantharā's thought and words are more or less shaped by the Goddess Sarasvatī. The importance of *Rāmāyaṇa* is elaborated in one of the chapters in the Kiṣkindhā section. Rāma quotes Manu to the dying Vāli.

Kauśika Rāmāyaṇa takes many popular elements into its making. It has 44 sections and once again the Yuddha Kāṇḍa figures more largely than the earlier sections. That Rāma is Viṣṇu incarnate, Hari and Narasimha is taken for granted. Though there are rich bits of description here, and there, it definitely shows elements from *Abdhuta Rāmāyaṇa* etc.—many portions of which reek with supernatural episodes and myths current about Rāvaṇa, Hanumān, Vāli etc. Neither Bharata nor Kaikeyī nor Śatrughna behave like dignified persons. Important episodes are dodged in summary mention and episodes which light up personality and character and depth of human feeling are poor. Two or three incidents are almost new. Śambūka who was killed in the Uttarakāṇḍa, who would have made a social document of the type of a person not entitled to a particular status or right, desires to perform Tapas with ambition to attain to heaven with his human corpus. In the *Pampa Rāmāyaṇa*, he is Candranakhīs son who by ill-fortune loses the object of his ambition and gets killed; with the same sword he was striving for, luck goes to Lakṣmaṇa. Śambūka here desires revenge against Kubera to rehabilitate himself after a defeat. He undertakes tapas to invoke Śiva to confer upon him the proper weapon with which to defeat Kubera. Kubera comes in disguise and, in distress as it were, prays to Lakṣmaṇa to rid the country of this Rākṣasa and deposits a sword by the side of the ant-hill which had grown over him. Lakṣmaṇa had casually gone to the place on a stag hunt and kills him. The second interesting point is that Kaikasī, mother of Rāvaṇa, induces Vibhīṣaṇa to advise Rāvaṇa against his wrong desire for Sītā. Vibhīṣaṇa fails. At a later stage she personally prays to her son to forswear his self-

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destructive desire for Sītā. She too fails. Kaikasī is among the women who led Maṇḍodarī at the funeral of the son. Of what age could she be? At one point Rāvaṇa's women are described as numbering 16 lakhs?[15] The most revealing point which comes out in the later stages is the fore-knowledge of Rāvaṇa himself that Rāma is Viṣṇu/Narahari. Narahari has killed and disembowelled Hiraṇyakaśipu in an earlier birth and Rāvaṇa knows he is due to be killed by Rāma; yet will not yield Sītā unwarrior-like to him.[16]

Rāma has to show up as Viṣṇu before he kills Rāvaṇa, who almost is feeling happy and expresses gratitude to his Lord at the last moment. This brings us to another point in some of the queer episodes connected with *Rāmāyaṇa* It is the bringing in of the Ahirāvaṇa and Mahirāvaṇa stories and the taking of Rāma into Pātāla Laṅkā from where Hanumān has to pick him back. Incidentally, Rāma is told that he cannot bring down the enemy unless some one goes into a Lotus Pond near about Rāvaṇa's palace and silts it before he can be killed; for, there lies the secret of his undying strength. Hanumān does it for him. Rāma has to hit at the lotus right of his chest to kill him. Luckily, Rāma will not stay here for receiving the hospitality of king Vibhīṣaṇa.[17] A brief mention is made of the ordeal by fire to which Sītā was subject. Though all wept and wailed, Rāma would have it; it is he who suggests the modus. And it is Hanumān that raises the pyre and sets it burning, not Lakṣmaṇa.

Many elements which have got into folklore, particularly through the *Yakṣagānas* of South and North Kannada Districts seem to have had their influence on the shaping and voice of the episodes. There is an elaborate Aṅgada Sandhāna, a talk between Indrajit and Aṅgada and the Mahirāvaṇa interludes have played a large part in popular memory.[18] And we see and feel a progressive deterioration in the quality of literary

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[15] There was no limit to the number to one like Rāvaṇa!

[16] This puts us in mind of a similar awareness of Duryodhana in the Kannada Bhārata,

[17] Āditya Hṛdaya and the advent of Mātali, Indra's Charioteer, were increments enough in Valmīki's version itself! Clear interpolations even there.

[18] *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* puts in other fantastic accounts.

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perception; the great culture and the idealism loses vigour, virtue and dignity: a feature found in every field of life not alone in literature.

About early 17th century again, the king Cāmarāja Vodeyar commissioned one Virupākṣa to write a prose version of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. It is called *Cāmarājokti Vāṇī Vilāsa Rāmāyaṇa*; of no great quality in imagination, it obviously is an adaptation of the original *kathā* in prose.

About the end of the 19th century, we get the *Rāmāśvamedha Story* again, by Muddana.[19] He narrates the story in beautiful prose where the wealth of Kannada literary composition and aesthetic tradition feeds the narration. It is in a literary, an almost manderin style. His imagination is live and the liberties he takes with language and narration are many. But the story drives interestingly forward. The framework of the story is set by a convention as it were; for, a young beloved wife Manoramā induces him to narrate to her some story to beguile the dull evenings of a rainy season. Its artistry and the fundamentally human and domestic life of a Kannada poet are full of vivacity, humour, creative criticism and the assurance and the aplomb of the writer. The atmosphere here is modern in feeling and attitude. He seems very much indebted to Lakṣmīśa for some elements in the story, though he says that the original Śeṣarāmāyaṇa kathā was narrated by the mythic Śeṣa to Vātsyāyana. Even here, the intelligence-man who intimates the breath of scandal speaks of a washerman who says he was not like Rāma to take back a wife too long away from him. This scratch was felt like a wound and after a lot of argument and expression of dismay by the brother, Lakṣmaṇa undertakes to carry out the behest of the elder brother whom he has loved, revered and followed through life. The career of the Aśvamedha horse, while it is taken through many kingdoms, is full of stories which derive from elsewhere. Śatrughna plays a warrior's part; he who had more or less no substantive place in the main *Rāmāyaṇa* story.

I have already indicated that all along till 15th and 16th centuries popular additions to the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* had

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19 Two other works *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* in prose and Rāmapaṭṭābhiṣeka in satpadi are also his.

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been made in folk song, Yakṣagāna, Harikathās, plays, puppet and pantomime shows and in the village theatre. Women in different parts of the country have their own versions in simple narrative verse or song; small groups of women of a particular class assemble to hear the stories of Kausalyā, Sītā, Anasūyā, Urmilā etc. as composed or narrated by one who had learnt or themselves composed.

Many episodes from Kausalyā Parianaya onwards through Kaikeyī Svayamvara, Putrakārneṣṭi and Ṛṣyaśṛṅga being brought to preside over it and onwards—get elaboration. Since the *Rāmāyaṇa* was in Samskṛt, a language not intelligible directly to a large number of people, narrative and descriptive parts are all separated and individually developed in popular lore as song and play. In the story being narrated in prose or verse by innumerable writers and speakers and other reciters of songs, the versions of the epic have resulted in distorting pictures and taking away what one might call the essential virtue and elevation of tone which is the life-breath of Vālmīki's work. And, so, what use is it to compare later work with a great Epic!

At least in the three levels of the original story, (1) the human and personal one of Rāma's life and the Daśaratha family; (2) the needs and requests of the Ṛṣis all along the way which becomes quite a public purpose for a kṣatriya of the eminence of Rāma; and (3) the Divine purpose of bringing Viṣṇu down to earth as man so as to be able to have Rāvaṇa killed, human beings and *vānaras* being the only species among the living who could compass his death. There is enough space and opportunity for any number and type of persons or interests—social, philosophical supernatural etc.—to fill-up openings and grind their own purposes. They are opportunities to speak in communal, sectional, religious, metaphysical or more purely literary extravaganza! Has it not been said of it—

Param kavīnām ādhāram
Abhigītam idam gītam.

Coming to the modern time, I shall mention a few works of poetry and prose which bear on the full *Rāmakathā*. Our time happily is one of conscious quality, both as perception and literary character. *Rāmāyaṇa* is an abiding source of inspiration

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and offers ample scope for modern interpretation, reconstruction and criticism; which is almost a totally new form of contribution to our letters, based on comparative literature. The text itself has controversial matter. Ours is by no means an Epic time. If in a modern time, any one takes up the presentation of an ancient Epic, it can be a revival, a re-interpretation, a mode of understanding, analytics and crowning it with wealth of literature and thought and critical judgement which have come to us through the centuries, not only in Indian literature, but in studying and imbibing all the influences of the East and the West. In addition to prose accounts by Prof. K.V. Puttappa himself in his *Janapriya Rāmāyaṇa*, Pandit Alasingrachar and many others, the *Rāmāyaṇa* story has been told by a number of writers: some good in kind, some reflecting the three schools, of Sankara, Rāmanuja and Madhva where the presentation is tinged by sectional colour.

Much life, humaneness and perception which Vālmīki endows his work with do not figure prominently in the later works. Rāvaṇa arrives at Sītā Svayamvara and fails to raise the bow or string it. Situations like Ahalyā's and Śabarī's sound sentimental. There is not one movement in Rāma's life, except his condition, almost, hysterical and insane when he loses Sītā, where his dignity suffers and he ceases to be self-controlled. Rāma is a Vaśin and even in situations when a lighter or reactionary mood catches him, he can soon bring himself and others back from what otherwise might be unworthy or harmful. The last moment when he faces Rāvaṇa—who despite the achievement of any special Śaktis grows into strength—it is not so much his consciousness of being a God. He knows the *Brahmāstra* and that it is not lightly to be used but the final one to clinch the situation.

In between, I should say that Śrī K.V.P. has written a playlet called *Vālmīkiya Bhāgya*, *Śūdra Tapasvī* etc. and Śrī Ti. Na. has written two verse and song plays on Ahalyā and Śabarī and some episodes in *Rāmāyaṇa*. Śrī A. na. kṛ has a prose play on the Banishment of Sītā,[20] On Śabarī and her attitude a few

[20] Dr. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar has written a critical presentation on the work in his Ādikavi Vālmīki, making suggestions about the acceptability of some and rejection of other parts as not likely parts of the original epic. His character-analysis and presentation of a few episodes are rich to a degree.

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good lyrics by others also may be counted, some lyrical, some symbolic. So that in the modern time, the poetic sensitivity is continually being aroused and fed by Vālmīki.

I am taking up mainly two major works in verse.[21] Prof. Dr. K. V. Puttappa's *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa Darśana* comes earlier in the 1940s, Dr. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar's 'Śrī Rāma Paṭṭābhiṣeka' about 1972. They represent two types of sensibility. Prof. K.V.P. (Kuvempu) creates an atmosphere and a metaphysical framework and presents the situations he deals with, with poetic plenitude. The forests, the hills and the lakes, rivers, sunrises and sunsets, the moonlight, the onset of rains and clouds and the downpour of rain get handled magnificently. Some episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are not taken up, while some others like the characterisation of Mantharā, Śabarī, Tārā and Vāli, Mandodarī and Rāvaṇa are re-creations of a new kind. They embody all that has been said before integrating them in a principle of interpretation. I cannot speak of literary purpose and achievement here but all through the influence of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton and Sāvitrī can be felt. When a bullet in a tiger hunt is described, a modern time rushes in to look on the story. Possibly, the integral vision, as-called by Aurobindo, and the Uapaniṣadic idea of Pūrṇa is got in and it seems to be present in the discovery of the spiritual substantiality of Viṣṇu. The explanation to Girijā by Śiva and the Poet's own presentation of the Pañca Kośas—Annamaya, Prāṇamaya, Manomaya, Vijñānamaya and Ānandamaya—are taken up as ascent and descent in the awareness of persons, in the course of the story and in the poet's own description of the cosmic significance of the events in vision about the whole *Rāmāyaṇa* atmossphere. The truth of truth as embodying eternal verities he strives at; he says, 'Rāma himself in the last stage of the fight with Rāvaṇa takes on stature as the one who sees the essence of the Rāvaṇa attitude, as part of the supreme consciousness. The elements in the description of this work may be sensed as the function of what the poet deems his final perception of truth, almost as if it

[21] D. V, G.'s 'Śrī Rāma Parīkṣaṇa' is a justification, almost, an idealisation, of certain situations in terms of thought and interpretation. Vālivadha, banishment of Sītā are examples. But the questions raised by Lakṣmaṇa and the answer given to them do not yet solve them. These are today's attitudes which express a new critical sensibility.

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were, the flourish of a Mūlāhaṅkāra (मूलाहंकार), where the term Līlā (लीला) would be mild because a whole cosmic purpose is presented when Hanumān in the section called "Śrī Rāma Rāvaṇa Cit Tapaś Śrī" as the fulfilment of a destiny which began earlier than Mantharā's instigation of Kaikeyī to send Rāma to the forest as a purpose fulfilling itself. Almost from lines 320 onwards to 360 he speaks of Siddhi as being Kālānuvaśa to all. Even to him, this supreme consciousness had been submerged and unexpressed till then. "Forget what has happened so far", he says to Hanumān possibly remembering a very early dream of his seeing a giant monkey figure in it.[22] Many dreams happen to people at different times: to Rāvaṇa as to Daśaratha; to Rāma as to Śabarī; to Maṇḍodarī as to Sītā. "Fate has brought you only Hanumān", Rāma says, "into this context to learn of human energy and Nārāyaṇatva. It is a bridge created by Cit; and even the conduct of life in Hanumān".[23] It is private and exclusive even to him. A Līlā is being performed. Do not the Upanishads put it as "Vijnātam avijānatām? "I am the basic source of Rāvaṇa's Śakti itself. It is impossible for another to vanquish my Asatśakti. You will witness now the Alaukika Vidhāna of Cit Tapaś Śakti" etc. Rāvaṇa does not fall dead on the field of battle. In a delirious state he is taken out at the end when the Brahmāstra is used against him. By the gift of Brahmā he has been able to catch hold of it and he feels he has captured Rāma himself-symbolic- and it is that Cit Śaktī that finally destroys him as man.

Like a purified tragic hero, he too desires, almost developing the concept of the *Rāmāyaṇa* by the Jaina-Nāgacandra, that he would bring Rāma into his place and hand over to him Sītā, treating him as an honoured quest, a plan he, in confidence, has vouchsafed only to Mandodarī once before. There is also a strange suggestion in this Rāmāyaṇa that Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa will be born as two children to Sītā in the next birth! Which can startle many differently but as part of the fulfilment in sublimation of an ambition of Rāvaṇa.

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22 That Rāma vouchsafed to Hanumān his divinity when he first met him is part of an earlier Kannada poem.

23 A "Pariṇāmaka Nāmarūpaka Nisarga Sahavyogi" etc.

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Among the textual modifications we find in the Darśana, Urmilā devotes herself to austerity on the banks of Sarayū.[24] She is brought back to Ayodhyā at the time of the coronation fourteen years after. Tārā commits herself to flames along with husband Vāli. Rumā is undefiled by Vāli, an act of redemption, which makes things cleaner and straighter. Maṇḍodarī and Sītā behave towards each other like sisters, each devout to her Lord. Mantharā has no doubt private reasons of grouse against Rāma and his mother but her reasons for instigating Kaikeyī, if not exactly caused by that circumstance, yet toughens her in connection with pressing the claims of Kaikeyī on one side and seeing that Daśaratha does not give away and Rāma does not take with him any material comforts to make agreeable his life in the forest. But what is most interesting is that like a few other symbolists earlier and many more later, she is made an instrument of destiny. She is the Māyā, which not only envelops but drives the situation, hard careering. The Ṛṣi motif which employs Rāma in a public cause like working for their liberation from fear, loss of life and disturbance of Tapas is not much on sight. But that is what lands Rāma and Sītā in all the consequences; more fateful in the life of Sītā than in that of Rāma. Ahalyā is like in later myth, a big piece of stone and Rāma climbs it and dances in excitement. The stone softens gradually into the beautiful woman that Ahalyā is. Above all, there is a grind of a metaphysical purpose which gathering up all the earlier poetic associations with Viṣṇu's Avatāra as Rāma grows into the concept of Harihara-Brahmātmaka as a feature of Parabrahma in many other Kannada works and the idea of the Cit and Prakṛti and Puruṣa of the Sāmkhya are all integrated into an Aurobindo-synthetic which makes the primal essences not merely supreme but supra. The fire-ordeal scene is rendered most as in Vālmīki.

This metaphysical purpose and the linguistic ability of the writer gathers from a study of our classics, and other Epics, and mediaeval literature and makes the work self-conscious, and

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[24] *Cf.* Rabindranath Tagore's note 'Kavyer Anadar", the treatment by that poet of a 2 or 3 neglected women in our literature.

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although to some, possibly, wordy and loud, it yet becomes impressive as a work in literature. The theme is noble and any one can see it can sustain any creed.

Dr Masti's *Śrī Rāma Paṭṭābhiṣeka* is a different in style, tone, narration and ethos; a pole apart. If the framework of a metaphysical structure and the principle of Fate-or Law in the 'Darśana' drives to destruction of self, in other, it leads to success of Rāma in the Paṭṭābhiṣeka. The wait in expectation of Rāma's return and the Paṭṭābhiṣeka are the principle of unity here. A few changes have been made in the structure of the story.[25] A few inconsistencies and misleading accounts which appear to him to have supplied sectional or other notions or prejudices of later writers are cleared. From beginning to the end this work is homely, simple, live and concrete. The human credibility of the story and the desire to make it acceptable to the contemporary mind is throughout present. It is not a straight narration from the beginning of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story to the end. Though as devout a lover of Rāma as any, he rejects the primary conception of the *Avatāra kathā*. The esteem and the lasting virtue of the heroes are based on the human virtues in the principal characters. Wherever deemed necessary he developes character, motif and elements of human nature as a master-writer of the short story. The situations are endowed with grace and smoothness of tone. Intent, motive and act on one side, knowledge, feeling and belief on another, articulate character and situation, though the narration is carried on in different stages. It is a co-operative effort in presentation.

The present writer stands midway in age-between Dr. Masti, who nearly 10 years older, and to Dr. Puttappa, nearly as many years younger, sees the ambition and power of the younger man and the wisdom and smoothness characteristic of the elder, who has grown up in piety; Masti has neither diluted nor complicated his basic vision. Truth to socially organised life and the level from which he speaks can sometimes look like making explanation or comment or elaboration tame and disarmingly quiet. He too does not accept—as in the Jaina tradition-that the

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25 Based on what the author cuts out as distortions and interpolations which he had expounded in an illuminating critical prose work on the Ādi Kavi earlier.

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although to some, possibly, wordy and loud, it yet becomes impressive as a work in literature. The theme is noble and any one can see it can sustain any creed.

Dr Masti's *Śrī Rāma Paṭṭābhiṣeka* is a different in style, tone, narration and ethos; a pole apart. If the framework of a metaphysical structure and the principle of Fate-or Law in the 'Darśana' drives to destruction of self, in other, it leads to success of Rāma in the Paṭṭābhiṣeka. The wait in expectation of Rāma's return and the Paṭṭābhiṣeka are the principle of unity here. A few changes have been made in the structure of the story.[25] A few inconsistencies and misleading accounts which appear to him to have supplied sectional or other notions or prejudices of later writers are cleared. From beginning to the end this work is homely, simple, live and concrete. The human credibility of the story and the desire to make it acceptable to the contemporary mind is throughout present. It is not a straight narration from the beginning of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story to the end. Though as devout a lover of Rāma as any, he rejects the primary conception of the *Avatāra kathā*. The esteem and the lasting virtue of the heroes are based on the human virtues in the principal characters. Wherever deemed necessary he developes character, motif and elements of human nature as a master-writer of the short story. The situations are endowed with grace and smoothness of tone. Intent, motive and act on one side, knowledge, feeling and belief on another, articulate character and situation, though the narration is carried on in different stages. It is a co-operative effort in presentation.

The present writer stands midway in age-between Dr. Masti, who nearly 10 years older, and to Dr. Puttappa, nearly as many years younger, sees the ambition and power of the younger man and the wisdom and smoothness characteristic of the elder, who has grown up in piety; Masti has neither diluted nor complicated his basic vision. Truth to socially organised life and the level from which he speaks can sometimes look like making explanation or comment or elaboration tame and disarmingly quiet. He too does not accept—as in the Jaina tradition-that the

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25 Based on what the author cuts out as distortions and interpolations which he had expounded in an illuminating critical prose work on the Ādi Kavi earlier.

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rulers and people of Kiṣkindhā were Vānaras. They belong to a 'Vanara Class' and that Rāvaṇa and others are Rākṣasas, thirsty of human blood. Even the final fight is toned down as much as the ugliness of a Śūrpaṇakhā; and the attack is not in thousands on Rāma by Khara; the too many leaders in the Sixth Kāṇḍa, the strength of armies by lakhs and crores is dismissed. One should have liked, however, a fuller note on the Ahalyā episode.[26]

The story is taken up by many people as I have said. Guha is assumed to have come to Nandigrāma to give what news he could about Rāma's return and from then onward he, Sumantra, Hanumān, Tārā, Aṅgada, Analā—daughter of Vibhīṣaṇa, Lakṣmaṇa etc. narrate the portions of the story to the extent they know personally and have experienced.[27] The whole story is tilted to begin with the decision of Bharata to burn himself if the brother does not turn up that day—the termination of the 14 year period—as promised him at Citrakūṭa. He is persuaded to hold on till the next day when everyone feels hopeful and sure Rāma will come. Hanumān comes crying out the essential news first and all are happy. The mothers are informed and others get ready for the reception with preparations fully made to proceed to Ayodhyā. The town prepares to lodge and make comfortable all the incoming guests. It is the good fortune of Hanumān to give the news of the return of Rāma to Bharata, even as he had carried news and trust to Sītā at Laṅkā and his return to Rāma with a token of Sītā's loyalty and trust. Rāma and Sītā desire to keep Hanumān with them though at first Rāma is loth to request Sugrīva to leave back the loyal friend in his service. But king Sugrīva offers him on his own in consultation with his elders as a token of their regard. The story as narrated by Tārā to Kausalyā and the queens is idyllic while it presents a picture of a whole tribe; almost a tribal documentary. Vālmīki's Tārā would seem to some a half-damaged angel but essentially she is great and wise and well-versed in the basic courtesies of the

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[26] And the later one at Janaka's court could have been noticed. The earnestness and affection of Śatānanda as he inquired of and was answered about the reunion of his parents Ahalyā and Gautama which Vālmīki particularly notes, are too deep for tears.

[27] To Hanumān the incidents till he met the brothers near the Pampā lake could be more hearsay than knowledge.

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world, beneficent and circumspect. The feeling one gets in this work is of beneficence. Analā, Saramā and Trijaṭā are lovely little young ladies at Laṅkā, daughters in Rāvaṇa's family, Analā, being actually daughter to Vibhīṣaṇa. The affection and cheer permitted by Rāvaṇa himself to let her stay as companions to Sītā is extremely loveable and wins the heart of old Kausalyā. All along details are filled up and anecdotes develop into significant aspects of character and being.[28] A balance and proportion are present and sweetness and light play on all. If Prof. Puttappa's is power, intellection and enterprise, Masti's is light and wisdom.[29] Kaikeyī feeling that all planks to hold or save herself are lost, reconciles herself with her position after the death of Daśaratha. She is contrite and is sisterly and joins the other two. It is tapas by itself to regain what little was still possible to win back the affection of her son Bharata. Only Mantharā remains a type-phenomenon-to the last not quite reconciled. Her retrospective partisan account indicates it and closes an account of her life as she lies down to sleep in Kaikeyī's palace on the day of the later coronation. Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa and others who have come are impressed with the queen mothers and the Rāma Brothers. Śatrughna has some part to play. It is a pity that Sumitrā is even here a stand-back. Urmilā is finally able to meet her husband. The account of her given by the elders, the little personal conversation between her and Sītā elucidate the nobility of her mind. The 'Darśana' renders "Urmilā its homage quite seriously at two stages, once after Lakṣmaṇa has left and again after the brothers and Sītā have returned. *"Vṛddhopasevī Lakṣmīvān.. .na bahu bhāṣita"* was Lakṣmaṇa in Vālmīki and even more so was she. Worthy wife to a worthy husband who, forgetting wife and home and mother, had left Ayodhyā, in service of his brother and sister-in-law; "Urmilā could understand him; for a word is said to have been uttered to her, as it is depicted here, when Lakṣmaṇa

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[28] The creation of a character like the grandson of Sumantra as a charioteer is a little vignette. Vālmīki had said that in joy at the hearing of Rāma's coronation, mothers who had brought forth their first male child forgot the thrill of child birth. Masti notices it and links up two characters on the scene—sad Kausalyā's on one side and the graciousness of Sītā's on the other.

[29] The versions of this story brings to mind a method used by Browning and in India by Tagore in the Home and the World.

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spoke to her of his resolve and got her consent (poor dear!) to go and be with his brother. All along it is a Tapasya and austerity in different forms. The description of their meeting back at Ayodbya is satisfying but she is still a 'silent warrior.' To her is reserved the part of listening to all the delights of nature experienced 14 years through!

There is nothing to disturb the even tenor of the pictures of human life and situation depicted. Analā's description of what her uncle had done, like Tārā's of Vāli, is hard, no doubt, but incidentally tells us of how human Rāvaṇa was in relation to this little girl—almost the only daughter in the family. It is a remarkable addition of colour.

The coronation and its public celebration and expression of the joy are brought off with an exposition of Rājadharma by Vasiṣṭha like the one given to Daśaratha when he ascended the throne and as the tradition came down from Manu and Ikṣvāku onwards. It speaks of kingly duty and utter devotion to the welfare of the people. The king is the Agent and the representative of that supreme power which presides over the fortunes of the Universe which can work out its purposes only through the king. It can make a little handbook of political ethics sanctified by custom and the rule of Dharma. Rāma's realisation that it is the duty of a king to protect the good and Sītā's declaration that the privilege of the Ārya is to be kind to all;—for, who is without defect or failure in conduct? "Na kaścinnāparādhyati?" The essential truths of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are conveyed simply in language which all can understand and which if one does not hear or read attentively, may easily miss.

The modern period has thus a distinct contribution to make in understanding the significance of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, inherited as it has the wealth of past and present and of all climes and tongues and persuasions. It has had its triumphs and distortions but the experience is one of deep appreciation. Only we do not have aberrations like Menon's or Dutt's *Meghanāda Vadha*.

Our *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition in the country is one of the reverence and written about or spoken or sung; such as will establish the enduring worth of Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Hanumān. The *Rāmāyaṇa* story has deeply influenced the life of the people.

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Men and women are named after many of them and from times past men and women gather together to celebrate the birth-day of Rāma and his marriage with Sītā and their coronation as well as the great episodes in Vālmīki's work. Whether scholarship accepts the authenticity of Sītā's exile or not, it touches a tender chord and has earned for it cherishment. Almost all parts of the country claim place and name and even the lives and memories of these worthies. To one section of the Hindu population, the Kaiṅkarya of Lakṣmaṇa is the greater; to the other Bharata and his Pādukā-Paṭṭābiṣeka are a consummation and in both the disinterested regard and self-denial are adored. Both are Rāmānujas, each in his great way. Surrender (Śaraṇāgati) of Vibhīṣaṇa is another memorable event. And the Brothers and Sītā and Hanumān are parts of what they have liked to cherish and worship as expression of the Divine.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN MALAYALAM LITERATURE AND FOLK-LORE

By **N. V. KRISHNA WARRIOR**

The mother tongue of the majority of people inhabiting the State of Kerala[1] on the west coast, Malayalam, is one of the four cultivated Dravidian languages of South India. It is believed that the dialect of Tamil which was current in this area evolved into a separate language with its own alphabet, script and written literature around the middle of the 9th century A.D. This development is attributed to a variety of causes, the most important among them being the process of Sanskritisation resulting from large-scale influx of Brahmins of Aryan descent from north and east who wielded political, economic and cultural hegemony in this area for several centuries. Unlike in the other parts of the country, the Brahmins in Kerala mingled freely with the local population, taking advantage of the indigenous system of matrilineal inheritance which enabled them to marry into the families of the higher non-Brahmin castes and yet to preserve the purity of their own caste in tact. The progeny of these Brahmins belonged to the castes and families of their mothers, with the consequence that within a few generation of only those who could boast of some Brahmin blood in their veins, but the whole of the upper strata of Kerala society became profoundly Aryanised as far as culture and outlook on life were concerned. In these circumstances it was but natural that Tamil was soon replaced by Sanskrit as the medium of higher education and culture and intellectual pursuits. The emergence in the 9th century A.D. of the scholar-saint Sri Śaṅkarācārya who could give a decisive turn to the spiritual career of the entire nation for centuries to come, from an obscure village in Kerala, becomes understandable only when viewed against this background.

The chief instrument of Sanskritising the entire community under the then prevailing conditions was, naturally, the

[1] According to the 1971 census there are 1,69,94,191 persons speaking Malayalam all over India; their number in Kerala State being 1,60,65,740.

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popularisation of the two great Epics, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. Which were, and still are, regarded as epitiomising the wisdom of the Nation matured through ages and which served both as the sacred and the secular literature for every region in India. Under the hegemony of Brahmins, temples were built in every village, and these soon became the fulcra of not only religious and cultural, but also of political, administrative and social life of the community. According to tradition the narrow strip of the west coast from Gokarnam in the Mysore State in the north of Kanyakumari in Tamilnadu in the south constituted one geographical entity known as Kerala. This was divided into two cultural zones as Tulunadu and Malanadu on the basis of the two main regional languages. Both these divisions were considered to consist of 3 villages (Grāma), each village having its own central temple (Grāma Kṣetra) where the leaders of the community met from time to time and transacted political administrative business. These temples also served as centres of higher education. There are records to show that several of these temples had been endowed to feed students undergoing courses in various branches of knowledge, while some temples had instituted what in modern academic parlance may be called "Mahābhārata Chairs", to which learned persons, who were paid sumptuously for the job they did, were appointed. These temple professors were designated "Bhārata Bhaṭṭas", and it was their main duty to expound the great epic daily to the rural folk, who though many of them were illiterate, imbibed the essentials of culture from these discourses.

Many of these temples had within their precincts, buildings specifically designed for dramatic performances based mainly on the stories of the two great Epics. The texts for these performances were in Sanskrit, but each sentence and each word in these texts was lucidly explained in the local language with plenty of hilarious humour and all sorts of interesting anecdotes thrown in, so that the rustic people enjoyed immensely and congregated in large numbers at these performances which thus played a very effective role in the process of their acculturation. More details of these dramatic performances will be given towards the end of this paper. What concerns us here is the fact that the regional language, which was a dialect of Tamil, was completely transformed in the course of these discourses not

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only by extensive borrowings from the rich vocabulary, but also by unrestricted adoption of idioms, phrases and even morphological devices of Sanskrit.

The earliest inscription discovered in Kerala is assigned to the 9th century A.D. The language of this inscription, though possessing certain distinct characteristics both in orthography and grammar, is Tamil. No literary work in Malayalam, which may be assigned to a period earlier than the 12th century A.D. has so far been discovered. However *Rāmacaritam*, which is one of the earliest Malayalam works so far discovered and is assigned to the 12th century A.D., shows clear marks of literary cultivation of the language for a fairly long stretch of time.

From this formative period which is considered to have lasted from the 9th to the 12th century A.D., the Malayalam literature emerged in two distinct streams. One of these streams called "Maṇipravālam", —which term signified a harmonious blending of the local language and Sanskrit, — was intensively Sanskritised, had all the phonemes of Sanskrit in addition to the Dravidian, employed Sanskrit metres, was more secular than religious, and generally tried to approximate to models in Sanskrit. This stream was destined to gain the upper hand in the coming centuries. The other streams which stuck to Tamil models and employed only Dravidian phonemes and indigenous metres, was called "Pāṭṭu" which term simply meant a composition intended for singing. Paradoxically, this stream was more serious and religious in tone, and took its themes from the Epic of Sanskrit. Gradually these two streams merged and in the works of the great Tuñcattu Ezhuttacchan of the 16th century A.D. they lost their separate identities forever. But before we take up the works of Ezhuttacchan we have to consider three works belonging to the Pāṭṭu genre and one work belonging to the Maṇipravālam genre, which have a direct bearing on our theme, which is the story of Rāma in Malayalam literature.

We have to begin our discussion with *Rāmacaritam,* which as already stated is also the most important of the earliest works in Malayalam. Composed in indigenous metres, most of them current also in Tamil, and maintaining throughout the alliterative devices of *Monai* (repetition of the first syllable in both hemistichs), *Etukai* (repetition of the second syllable in all the

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four lines of a quatrain) and *Antādi* (beginning of the next verse with the last word of the previous verse), which are specific features of prosody in Dravidian languages, *Rāmacaritam* consisting of 1814 quatrains in 164 sections is a perfect model of "Pāṭṭu" and is a free rendering of Yuddha-kāṇḍa of *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*. The author whose name is Ceramān and who on insufficient grounds is identified with a king of Travancore shows considerable poetic skill and absolute command over the language which abounds in Tamilisms. The work is couched in the grand epic style, and is suffused with a spirit of devotion to the hero, whose deification is more pronounced than in the original by Vālmīki. Though replaced as a religious text by the enormously popular *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇam* of Ezhuttacchan, *Rāmacaritam* had its days of popularity, and will continue to occupy a place of eminence due to its literary grandeur and linguistic peculiarities in the history of Malayalam literature.

The work which claims our attention next is also a Pāṭṭu, assigned to the early 15th cent. A.D., and is popularly known as *Kannassa Rāmāyaṇam*. This is a free rendering of the whole of *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* in 3059 quartrains of several indigenous metres which observe the alliterative devices mentioned above. The language, however, is more Sanskritised than in *Rāmacaritam*, and has all the phonemes of Sanskrit in addition to the Dravidian phonemes. The poet Rāma Paṇikkar, who is also known as Kannassa, has in several places condensed the original and at certain places added to it portions translated from other works in Sanskrit. It is rather unfortunate that *Kannasa Rāmāyaṇam*, which has no mean literary excellence, did not attain the popularity it deserved, though there are evidences to show that it served Ezhuttacchan later as a model for his renderings of Epics..

Less refined than both *Rāmacaritam* and *Kannassa Rāmāyaṇam* is *Rāmakathāppāṭṭu*, another running translation of *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* in the Pāṭṭu tradition, with 3,163 verses in 279 sections. The author Ayyippilla Āśān seems to have been later than Rāma Paṇikkar, and is assigned to the end of the 15th century A.D. The language shows an overwhelming influence of the colloquial Tamil spoken in the bilingual areas of Southern Travancore. Used for recital in temple festivals to the

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accompaniment of a small drum called Candravalayam, this work did not attract much attention at any time.

From these works in the Pāṭṭu tradition we now go to *Rāmāyaṇa Campū* in which the highly Sanskritised Maṇipravālam tradition has attained its culmination. This monumental work is assigned to Pūnam Nampūtiri who is supposed to have lived in the latter half of the 15th century A.D. Divided into twenty independent books beginning with the Birth of Rāvaṇa (Rāvaṇodbhava) and ending with the ascension of Rāma to heaven (Svargārohaṇa), this work, though interspersed with short pieces in indigenous metres considered as varieties of prose, is composed mainly in Sanskrit works as Bhoja's *Rāmāyaṇa Campu* or Ananta Bhaṭṭa's *Bharata campu.* As the work was intended as a text to be expounded at the one-man dramatic performance in temples known as *Pāṭhakam,* well-known verses from the entire range of classical Sanskrit literature are quoted in suitable contexts. The objective of the poet is literary appreciation and aesthetic enjoyment rather than the evoking of religious fervour. The poet is a master in conjuring dramatic situations and depicting all varieties of sentiments, and excels in the portrayal of humour and the erotic. The majestic flow of the well-made verses and the perfect blend of the diverse components of the language exercise an hypnotic effect on the reader which can only be experienced, but never described.

Occupying a central place not only in the Rāma-lore in Malayalam, but also in the whole of Malayalam literature is the translation of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* by Tuncattu Ezhuttacchan. Composed in the middle of the 16th century A.D., this classic immediately became the most sacred religious text of almost all sections of the Hindus who considered it obligatory to recite the whole of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* at least once every year, and portions of it on special occasions. As a literary masterpiece *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* also found its way into the homes of non-Hindus. The Sanskrit original of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* is supposed to be a portion of *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa,* and consists of 4,200 verses in 64 cantos. Although inferior to Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa as literature, this work came into prominence as a text expounding the school of Bhakti (religious devotion) with a non-dualistic slant.

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Ezhuttacchan's work is called a Kilippāttu (Parrot's Song) because the author has conceived it as being narrated by a divine parrot. It is more than a translation of the original, for portions have been added, altered or deleted and suitable figures of speech and other embellishments have been supplied. Being a saintly religious reformer and initiater of a cultural movement which included the spread of literacy among the masses, Ezhuttacchan has introduced a number of psalms in praise of the Supreme God and philosophical and ethical discourses in the course of the narration of the story. The indigenous meters, formerly used as quatrains, have now assumed the form of couplets greatly facilitating the flow of narration. Among the different kinds of alliterations, only the repetition of the second syllable, and that too between the two lines of the couplet, is insisted upon. The language is Sanskritised, but the style is racy and has a pleasing native flavour, and it attains to heights of inspired utterence when dealing with profound philosophical problems and singing the glories of the Lord. The descriptions are vivid and vigourous. Portrayal of characters is bold and to the point. Surpassed in poetic beauty, perhaps, by the author's own condensed version of *Mahābhārata* alone, this gem of a classic has occupied the highest place of reverence in the hearts of Malayalees ever since it was composed. It is not surprising that Ezhuttacchan was succeeded by a host of a imitators who, if they could not make any substantial contributions to Malayalam literature, at least ennobled their own creative talents by singing the praises of their chosen deities.

The phenomenal popularity attained by Ezhuttachhan's version of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* did not diminish the eternal fascination of Vālmīki's work. About one century after Ezhuttacchan, Keralavarma Raja of Kottayam translated *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam* in simple Malayalam adopting the same Kilipāṭṭu style which came into vogue after Ezhuttacchan. Coming to more recent times, poet Vallathol has given us a beautiful verse-to-verse translation of the great epic which it is hardly possible to improve upon.

There are innumerable works in Malayalam which have been inspired by *Rāmāyaṇa* and it is not possible to catalogue them here. Mention, however, may be made of *Bālarāmāyaṇam* by Kumāran Āśan which is a children's classic in *Anuṣṭubh*

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metre. Kumāran Āśan has also composed a fairly long reflective poem called *Sītā lost in reveries* (Cintāviṣṭayāya Sītā) which is acclaimed as the masterpiece of the poet by many discerning critics and which contains an unforgettable portrayal of the noblest of epic heroines.

The story of Rāma has been the theme of a number of neoclassical Mahākāvyas in Malayalam, beginning with *Rāmacandravilāsam* of Azhakattu Padmanābha Kurup, which, it may be stated incidentally, set the trend for this type of composition, in the language.

Rāma-epics from several languages other than Sanskrit have also been translated or adapted into Malayalam. Of these, the metrical translations, of Kamban's classic from Tamil by Dr. S.K. Nayar and Tulasidasa' *Rāmacaritamānas* from Hindi by Sri Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup, deserve special mention.

Dramatic representation was a very effective method adopted in Kerala for the popularisation of the story of Rāma. As stated earlier, many of the important temples in Kerala had buildings within their precincts which were called "Temples of Acting" (Kūttampalam) which term signified the sanctity and religious importance attached to the performances within them. The performers belonged to two communities called Cākyārs and Nampiyārs, who generation after generation, nurtured this art with single-minded devotion, and were paid for this service from the temple funds. Their repertoire consisted of a dozen Sanskrit plays of which three, viz. *Abhiṣeka* and *Pratimānāṭaka* by Bhāsa and *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi* by Śaktibhadra are based on the Rāma theme. Even while presenting some other plays, such as *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* of Bhāsa, the story of Rāma with all details is brought in and narrated by Vidūṣaka. There is a form of mono-acting called *Kūttu*, and it is based on a text called *Rāmāyaṇam Prabandham*, which is a compendium of choicest Sanskrit verses culled from different sources, with particular portions composed by the renowned scholar-poet Melapūtter Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭātiri of late 16th century A.D. The regular acting of the play, called *Kūṭiyaṭṭam* (literally, acting involving more than one actor), is very elaborate and technical and is perhaps the only form surviving to this day of Sanskrit play-acting according to the prescriptions of Bharata's *Nāṭya*

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Śāstra. It is believed that this kind of play-acting was instituted in the temples of Kerala about the 9th century A.D. and thus it claims unbroken succession for more than a millennium.

The well-known Kathakali dance-drama is a popularised version of *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*, and started its career as *Rāmanāṭṭam* (Rāma Ballet), popularly known as Kathakali, in the second half of the 17th century A.D. The text for this new form of dance-drama consisted of eight musical plays covering the story of *Rāmāyaṇa* and composed by a King of Koṭṭārakkara. Though not possessing much literary value, these plays are still popular because of their stage appeal. Incidents from *Rāmāyaṇa* have also been utilised by subsequent authors for composing Kathakali plays, and one of the most favoured characters on the Kathakali stage has been Hanumān with his mighty deeds, monkeyish pranks and sublime devotion to the Lord.

Another popular performing art of Kerala is *Tullal* initiated and brought to perfection in the middle of the 18th century A.D. by Kuñcan Nampiyār, the scholar-poet, who was also the greatest humourist that Kerala ever produced. *Tullal* is a one-man dance-drama wherein the dancer-actor presents Purāṇic stories, and incidentally provides much mirth to the rustic audience by introducing, as occasion demands, droll stories and sharp social criticism. Kuñcan Nampiyār has composed more than forty "Tale in Verse" for these performances of which eight are based on incidents from *Rāmāyaṇa*.

In *Tullal* the narration of the story is in verse; in *Pāṭhakam*, which is yet another temple art, the story is narrated in prose, based on verses in Sanskrit and fortified by histrionic talents. The story of Rāma is a great favourite also with the performers of *Pāṭhakam*. For presenting Rāma's story, the text now utilised is the *Rāmāyaṇam Prabandham* in Sanskrit. Formerly *Rāmāyaṇam Campu* of Pūnam which is in Malayalam, had also been utilised for this purpose.

Reference may also be made to the shadow-play known as *Tol-pāvakūttu* which is confined to a few Kālī temples in the Palghat District. In this kind of popular entertainment, shadows of leather puppets representing characters from *Rāmāyaṇa* are projected on to a screen, and the story is narrated by the chief performer, known as Pulavar, and his assistant, mostly in the

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form of dialogues, with occasional digressions on many an interesting point. The text used for this performance is Kamban's *Rāmāyaṇa* in Tamil.

The story of Rāma has several times been adapted for presenting on the modern Malayalam stage. The translation of Bhavabhūti's *Uttararāmacaritam* by Cattukutty Mannatiyar has been played to packed houses several times in the 19th century. Sri C.N. Srikanthan Nair and *Puṣpavṛṣṭi* by Thikkotiyan are some of the noteworthy successes in adapting the Rāma theme to be contemporary realistic theatre.

The Rāma theme has also found adequate expression through the graphic arts in Kerala. At Cochin there is a historic palace which contains a series of excellent mural paintings depicting the story of Rāma from his birth up to his triumphal return from exile. The temples dedicated to Rāma at Tiruvilvamala and Triprayar in Trichur District have selected episodes from *Rāmāyaṇa* scupltured in wood around the sanctum sanctorum. The temple of Rāma at the Padmanabhapuram palace which belonged to Kerala before the re-organisation of States has the whole of *Rāmāyaṇa* story carved in forty panels of wood. Gold bracelets with episodes from *Rāmāyaṇa* embossed around were once the proud possession of artistocratic ladies in Kerala. In more recent times, many of the dramatic incidents in the career of Rāma have suplied the themes for some of the most famous paintings by that gifted and popular artist, Raja Ravivarma.

A few remarks about the place of Rāma-worship in popular religion will not be out of place here. Hinduism in Kerala has always been very tolerant and surprisingly free from sharp sectional rivalries. It has been mainly centred on Tantric and Agamic worship in the temples consecreted to Śiva, Pārvatī (Kālī, Durgā), Viṣṇu, Śāśtā (Ayyappa) and Subrahmaṇya. Of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa is the favourite. Rāma, though accepted as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, has only a few temples dedicated to him. Of these the temples at Tiruvilvamala and Triprayar, to which reference has already been made in connection with the wood carvings in them, and the temple at Tellicherry are famous. The Kūṭamāṇikyam temple at Iriñjālakuḍa is dedicated to Bharata and the ancient temple at

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Muzhikkalam near Alwaye is dedicated to Lakṣmaṇa. Śatrughna too has a temple consecrated to him at Pakkil.

Hanumān has always been a deity dear to the masses, but surprisingly there is only one important temple dedicated to him in the whole of Kerala. This is the chief temple (Grāmakṣetra) of Ālattūr village near Ponnāṇi and Hanumān installed in this temple is the protecting deity (Paradevatā) of this village.

Devotees of Hanumān were not satisfied with the role, though by no means an insignificant one, assigned in *Rāmāyaṇa* to their chosen deity. They wanted to see him as the hero of an epic in his own right. *Pātālarāmāyaṇam* is such an epic, which presents one of several folk versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. Pātālarāvaṇa, the demon lord of the nether world, wanted to help his friend Rāvaṇa of Laṅkā, when the latter was fighting a losing battle, and abducted Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to his secret abode. The hero Hanumān knows about this and after a series of adventures and a few episodes of romance, kills the offender and rescues his masters, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, to continue their fight against Rāvaṇa. Based on this story there is a Kilipāṭṭu in Malayalam which was most likely composed in the 18th century A.D.

Yet another folk version of an incident in *Rāmāyaṇa* is contained in the song called 'The sorrow of Sītā" (Sītāduḥkham), also composed in the 18th century A.D. After the return of Rāma to Ayodhyā one day, the three mothers-in-law wanted Sītā to paint a picture of Rāvaṇa whom they had heard of so much, but did not have a chance to see. Sītā reluctantly complied with their command. The mothers-in-law who were very jealous of the favours she received from her fond husband, brought this picture, which was so life-like, to the notice of Rāma, who immediately grew suspicious of the chastity of his wife and ordered Lakṣmaṇa to take her to the forest and there to kill her. Lakṣmaṇa, though normally obedient to his brother, could not bring himself to commit such a heinous crime. He therefore placed Sītā at the hermitage of an ascetic in the forest, killed a salamander, and showed his sword drenched in blood to Rāma. Rāma was convinced of the death of Sītā, but not so the mothers-in-law, who said they could distinguish an animal's blood from that of human being. Lakṣmaṇa therefore

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had to go again to the hermitage, cut the little finger of Sītā with his sword, and show the blood to the royal ladies. This too did not carry conviction with the mothers-in-law who said that they could distinguish between the blood of a man and that of woman. Lakṣmaṇa got angry and asked them to cut one of their own limbs with the same sword and see if the two bloods were not of the same colour. This silenced the ladies, and everybody, except Lakṣmaṇa, thought that Sītā was dead. Rāma, however, was smitten with acute remorse. In course of time he came to know the truth and went to the hermitage to see his sons, when suddenly a deep chasm appeared in the earth and Sītā disappeared into it. Rāma tried to catch hold of her, but got in his hand only a single hair of Sītā.

There are a number of such folk versions of the incidents of *Rāmāyaṇa,* but the songs embodying them have hardly any literary merit.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN TELUGU LITERATURE AND FOLK-LORE

By **C. R. SARMA**

A Telugu proverb observes : "If you want to hear, hear the *Bhāratam;* If you want to eat, eat *gārelu* (round pan-cakes made of black gram)." This interesting and true observation must have come into vogue only after the Telugu version of the *Mahābhārata* became popular among scholars and masses as well.

Śrīmad Āndhra Mahābhāratamu, as the Telugu version is titled, written by the famous Poet-trio, is a piece of good literature in Telugu. It is at once a poem of outstanding literary merit and an authoritative book for usage. In fact, it is the first known literary work in Telugu literature. The Telugu *Mahābhārata* and its three authors—Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana—are, therefore, held in high esteem not only by their immediate successors but by the present-day writers too. The well-known twin poets, Tirupati Veṅkaṭa Kavulu, have rightly remarked that this work is a Veda to the Telugu people.

Among the Poet-trio, Nannaya is a superb story-teller. Even a casual reader can find in him a fascinating poet. Tikkana is a poet-dramatist. He is a master of human psychology and hence his characters appear before us and open their hearts. The last poet, Errana, is a descriptive writer and his poetry is serene and sublime. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Telugu *Bhāratam* is considered a fine poem and is read and enjoyed. But viewing from literary excellence, the same cannot be said about the Telugu *Rāmāyaṇas* though they are great in their own.

Despite the fact that the *Mahābhārata* has been a source of inspiration, the story of Rāma, as narrated by Vālmīki has greatly attracted the Telugu poets, old and modern. The Telugu mind is a stronghold of Rāma-cult. There is not a village worth its name which does not have a Rāma *mandir* (temple), big or small, where one can hear *bhajans*, in praise of Rāma sung with devotion. The devotees feel that the entire world is encompassed by Rāma. Some scholars have even declared that Rāma is the

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favourite deity of Āndhras. The birth-day of Rāma, *Rāma Navamī*, is celebrated with great enthusiasm throughout the Telugu region. Several places and persons are named after Rāma and other major characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

It is significant that Rāma's name is closely knit with the daily life of the Telugu people. While giving bath to children, usually the mother or any senior female member of the family, will utter the end: "Let Śrī Rāma protect you; be blessed with hundred years of life." (*Śrī Rāma rakṣā; nurellu āyussu*) and this is an age-old custom. Most of the Telugus commence their letters or marriage invitations with the customary phrase 'Sri Rāma Jayam' (Victory to Śrī Rāma). Yet another popular customs is to sing the song beginning with 'Ānandamāye ānandamāye' during weddings when the *mangala sūtra* is tied. This interesting song refers to the marriage of Sītā to Rāma. One can also notice the Telugu saying the words 'Rāma, Rāma (meaning alas), when they hear any tragic incident or bad news. Thus Rāma is invoked in time of trouble and this is a common usage. It is also worth mentioning here that a few incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story have been preserved in proverbs and phrases and they are in vogue to this day.

Thus it can be seen from the above that the story of Rāma is not a piece of ancient mythology but a living faith in the Telugu region.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* literature in Telugu is vast and varied and the poets drew inspiration mainly from Vālmīki. Works dealing with the Rāma-theme either in full or in parts are available in hundreds as the story is narrated in almost all literary genres—*Kāvya* (poetic composition, including major and minor poems), *Dvipada* (two-line verse), *Śataka* (century of verses), *Yakṣagāna* (dance-play), *Daṇḍaka* (a metrical composition in the form of stotra), *Geya* (song), *Cāṭu* (stray verse), prose, drama and the like. All the available books can be broadly classified as *Pūrva Rāmāyaṇa* (up to Rāma's coronation) and *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa* (the later story).

Besides, we have translations of the different versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, namely *Adhyātma, Ānanda, Adbhuta* and *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇas* and also from other Indian languages like Hindi, Tulasi's *Rāmacaritamānasa*, Tamil (Kamban's *Rāmāyaṇam*) and

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innumerable *Śatakas* with the refrain addressed to Rāma. There appeared *Śatakaṇṭha Rāmāyaṇas* also. Śatakaṇṭha, supposed to be a mighty warrior and a brother of Rāvaṇa, was killed by Sītā according to the *Śatakaṇṭha Rāmāyaṇam* which is also known as *Sītā Vijayam* (Sītā's victory). Till recently a feeling prevailed among the poets that writing on Rāma will lead to good. In fact, a distinguished poet of the 17th century observed : "A scholar who is endowed with the power of distinguishing the good from the bad and has the gift of writing poetry should not attempt unholy stories discarding the holy story of Rāma. If he did so, then, what is the use of his wisdom? What is the use of his fascinating poetry?"

Among the full length Telugu *Rāmāyaṇas* that have appeared in the past, *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam, Bhāskar Rāmāyaṇam, Kaṭṭa Varadarāju Rāmāyaṇam* and *Molla Rāmāyaṇam* deserve special mention. Of these, *Bhāskara* and *Molla Rāmāyaṇams* are written in *Campū* form (mixture of poetry and prose) while the others are couched in the *dvipada* metre.

Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam composed in the indigenous metre *dvipada*, is regarded as the earliest and complete *Rāmāyaṇa* in Telugu. Some scholars are of the view that it was written around 1240 A.D. It contains 17,290 *dvipads* or 34,580 lines. The author of this poem, like its date, is also open no doubt. Supporting the traditional view, some critics attribute the authorship to one Chakrapāṇi Raṅganātha. But curiously enough his name is not mentioned anywhere in the poem. The majority view is that this *Rāmāyaṇa* was written by a poet called Gona Buddha Reddi at the instance of his father Pāṇḍuraṅga Viṭṭhalanātha and that the poet named it after the later. Hence the name *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam*; though written by Gona Buddha Reddi, Raṅganātha is the abbreviated form of Pāṇḍuraṅga Viṭṭhalanātha.

Whoever the author may be, *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam* is one of the popular poems in Telugu and it is unique in itself for the following reasons : First : It is written in the indigenous metre; it can be conveniently sung and it is the first and complete *Rāmāyaṇa* composed in that metre. Second : some portions of this poem are sung during the shadow-play (*Tōlubommalāṭa*) which is very popular with the masses. Third : in this poem are found several interesting episodes or details which are not found in *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* as available in its

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present form, but prevalent in the Telugu folklore. Lastly, Rāvaṇa and other members of his family are portrayed in brighter hues in this poem. The story of Sulocanā, the daughter-in-law of Rāvaṇa, as depicted in the *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam* is superb and she can be well compared to Sītā regarding the virtue of chastity.

The other notable non-Vālmīki episodes or details that are found in this poem are : Indra assumes the form of a cock and crows near the cottage of Gautama; after fulfilling his evil desire with Ahalyā he leaves the cottage in his own form. The goddess of sleep approaches Lakṣmaṇa and he asks her to stay with his wife Urmilā till the exile period is over. Lakṣmaṇa draws seven lines around the hermitage and warns Sītā not to go beyond them; the account of Jambukumāra the son of Śūrpaṇakhā, the story of a squirrel which helped Rāma in the construction of the Setu, Aṅgada drags Mandodarī to the presenc of Rāvaṇa when he was performing a *homa*, Vibhīṣaṇa makes a disclosure (that Rāvaṇa's navel contains nectar) which finally leads to the ruin of Rāvaṇa; Hanumān, Vibhīṣaṇa and others dine with Rāma after the latter's coronation was over; Hanuman distributes to the other monkeys the food that was left out in Rāma's plate, and the story of Lakṣmaṇa's laughter in Rāma's court.

As already stated, *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam* presents a good picture of Rāvaṇa. His noble quality of appreciating the greatness of a mighty warrior even if he be his enemy has been well depicted in this poem. Rāvaṇa desires to instil fear in the minds of Rāma and his followers and so he exhibits all the precious articles which he acquired in different battles so as to be noticed by Rāma. As expected, Rāma looks at them and on enquiry learns from Vibhīṣaṇa that those precious ornaments were required by his brother by defeating the gods. Then Rāma gently aims an arrow at Rāvaṇa, which removes the necklaces worn by the maids attending on him, his umbrella is broken, but no one is hurt. This surprises Rāvaṇa considerably who forgets for the moment his enmity with Rāma and begins to praise his wonderful skill in archery. He addresses Rāma as *Vīrāgragaṇya*, the first among the warriors. The ministers of Rāvaṇa become impatient and say that an enemy should not be extolled thus. But Rāvaṇa chides them by asking, "should not the greatness of the mighty heroes be extolled?"

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The next poem that deserves mention is the *Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇam*. Some critics believe that this is anterior to the *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam*. But they are really contemporary works.

Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇam, a long poem in six cantos interspersed with prose passages, is written in the *Kāvya* style. On account of its sublime poetry, it is held in high esteem by the scholars. As is evident from the title, this poem is called after Bhaskara, one of the four authors, the other three being his disciples and friends. Though the style is not uniform throughout, this is a fine poem which is read much and appreciated.

The authors of the *Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇam* have been faithful to Vālmīki in narrating the main incidents of the story. Still they did not hesitate to include some non-Vālmīki episodes in their work.

Ahalyā becoming a stone as a result of Guatama's curse, the reason for enmity between Rāma and Mantharā, the maid servant of Kaikeyī, Lakṣmaṇa killing Jambukumāra, the son of Śūrpaṇakhā, Tārā cursing Rāma for killing her husband, the account of Kālanemi, the trusted servant of Rāvaṇa, Nārada's disclosure to Rāma that he was Viṣṇu when he and Lakṣmaṇa were bound by the serpent-arrows, Nala worshipping Lord Vināyaka (Gaṇeśa) before constructing the *Setu*, Rāma addressing Hanumān as his brother, while urging him to bring the Sañjīvi herb to bring back the fainted Lakṣmaṇa to life—are some of the new details or episodes one can find in *Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇam*.

Molla Rāmāyaṇam is also a popular poem which is equally enjoyed by the scholars and masses. A poetess belonging to the potter community, Molla who lived in the middle of the 14th century (some say 15th century) wrote her *Rāmāyaṇa* in a simple and fascinating style. She narrates in the *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa* a brief but interesting incident. Rāma notices Guha, the devotee-boatman, after reaching the Ganges asks him to take his party to the other side of the river. Guha immediately agrees with pleasure but fears that if Rāma should step into his boat, it may become a maid as he had already heard that a stone had changed into a sweet maid (Ahalyā) as the dust in the foot of Rāma touched it. His apprehension is genuine and so he washes

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Rāma's feet with water until the dust is fully removed and only then requests Rāma to get into his boat. This interesting incident not only brings out Guha's devotion to Rāma but gives a slight relief in the grief-stricken narrative.*

The *Rāmāyaṇa* written by Kaṭṭa Varadarāju, a royal poet of the 17th century, is yet another popular work in Telugu. It consists of six *Kāṇḍas* and 23,170 *dvipadas* or 46,340 lines and thus it is the biggest *dvipada* poem. It may be said that the poet tried to be faithful to the original. Still one can notice here some non-Vālmīki details or episodes. For instance, this poem informs that Rāma was born on Wednesday. This non-Vālmīki detail is also found in the *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam* and *Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇam.* According to *Molla Rāmāyaṇam,* Rāma and his brothers were born on Sunday.

Besides the above complete *Rāmāyaṇas,* we have in Telugu a few abridged versions. Among them *Rāmabhyudayam* written by Ayyalarāju Rāmabhadruḍu (1510–1580) deserves special mention. He was one of the distinguished *aṣṭadiggajas* (eight great poets) who flourished in the court of the famous Krishnadevaraya, an outstanding ruler and eminent poet. Ayyalarāju's poem, in eight cantos, is rightly regarded as a piece of good literature. His skill in condensing the story to suit the requisites of a *Prabandha* is commendable. Another notable poem is that of Kūchimañchi Timmakavi (1684–1757), a prolific writer. He wrote a *Rāmāyaṇa* in pure Telugu, devoid of Sanskrit words and compounds. That he could compose a poem with a limited vocabulary is not only daring but praiseworthy.

It is unfortunate that some Telugu *Rāmāyaṇas* are not extant now. The *Rāmāyaṇa* by Errana or Errapreggaḍa of the Poet-trio (13th century) is significant among them. This appears to be the first attempt of a faithful translation in verse of Vālmīki's poem. The patron of the poet himself declared that he got name and fame by causing Errana to write *Rāmakathā* which seems to be the title of Errana's *Rāmāyaṇam.* Another *Rāmāyaṇam* that is lost is *Annamayya Rāmāyaṇam* written by the famous *Vāggeyakāra* (composer of songs) Annamāchārya of Tirupati (1424–1503). So also the *Rāmāyaṇas* written by Koravi

* This incident is given in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*—Ed.

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Satyanārāyaṇa (14th century) and Chitrakavi Ananta Kavi (16th century) are not available. The *Raghunātha Rāmāyaṇam* written by Raghunatha Nāyak who ruled Tanjore from 1614 to 1633 is also not available in full. Only the first three *Kāṇḍas* and some verses in the fourth *Kāṇḍa* are now extant. Though it is not definitely known whether this royal poet had completed the *Rāmāyaṇa,* it is significant that his work was later translated into Sanskrit by his court poetess Madhuravāṇī.

Coming to the Uttara Rāmāyaṇa, *Nirvachanottara Rāmāyaṇam* by Tikkana of the Poet-trio (13th century) stands foremost. As the name suggests, this poem is written only in verses in ten cantos containing 1,260 verses. Tikkana's poem seems to be an independent one. He did not describe the death of Rāma. His Rāma appears to be an ideal man and a wise king. The next notable work is that of Kaṅkaṇṭi Pāpa Rāju of the 17th century. His poem contains about 3,000 verses and prose passages and it is, therefore, considered an elaborate work as against that of Tikkana which is concise. Unlike Tikkana, he was faithful to the original and translated all the stories left out by the former. Being a devotee of Rāma, Pāpa Rāju's poem is charged with steadfast devotion and is often read and enjoyed. Gona Kācha and Viṭṭhalarāju, the sons of Buddha Reddi, wrote in the *dvipada* metre the story of *Uttara-kāṇḍa* and this poem may be regarded as a sequel to the *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam.*

Though *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* has been a source of inspiration to all the *Rāmāyaṇa* poets, it is surprising that no sincere attempt was made to bring out a faithful translation of it. In fact, it was not the aim of the old Telugu poets to translate the Sanskrit epics *verbatim.* At some places, the original was closely followed, while at some other places additions were made or new details included. It is only in modern times, some scholars tried to bring out faithful translations of the Sanskrit originals.

Gopīnātham Venkaṭa Kavi (1820–1890) was the first to render the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* into chaste Telugu verse. A few more exact renderings also followed. But the translation of Vāvilikolanu Subba Row (1863–1939) entitled *Śrīmad Āndhra Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam* is generally acclaimed as a faithful and readable rendering. He had also published a valuable commentary to it.

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It is worthy of note that the story of Rāma has greatly inspired many modern writers also. Several interesting and critical writings dealing with different aspects of *Rāmāyaṇa* are being published in journals or book form. A good number of minor poems (*Khaṇḍa Kāvyas*) describing the various episodes or characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are also available. Distinguished poets like Viśvanātha Satyanārāyaṇa have written the complete *Rāmāyaṇa* in verse while some have translated the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* into the spoken idiom.

The *Adhyātma, Ānanda* and *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇas* are also available in Telugu either in prose or verse.

It will not be out of place here to mention some of the *Śatakas* extolling the greatness of Rāma and other characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. A good number of *Śatakas* have the refrain (*makuṭa*) addressed to Rāma in different names like Dāśarathi, Sītāpati and the like. *Dāśarathi Śatakam* written by Rāmadās of Bhadrācalam is soul-filling work. This *Śatakam* of a great devotee of Rāma is charged with spotless devotion. One *Śatakam* containing 200 verses briefly narrates the story of Rāma. The God-intoxicated musician Tyāgarāja described in his exquisitely fine songs several episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. Of the several *Yakṣagānas* (operas) dealing with the Rāma-theme, *Sugrīva Vijayam* by Kandukūri Rudra Kavi (16th century) stands foremost.

This brief account of the *Rāmāyaṇa* literature in Telugu will be incomplete if the folk songs extolling the qualities of the various characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are not discussed.

The folk authors too have been deeply inspired by the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. It appears that the tragic story of Sītā has captured the fancy of several folk authors.

The presence of a considerable number of songs describing in detail various incidents in her life bears ample testimony to this fact. Several interesting details about Sītā are found in the folk songs. One of them, entitled *Santa Govinda Nāmamulu* narrates the birth of Sītā as follows :

> "After taking leave of Lord Viṣṇu, she (Ādilakṣmī) enters a lotus in a lotus pond at Laṅkā, the capital of the king Rāvaṇa. When the servants of Rāvaṇa enter the pond to

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gather flowers, they hear a strange voice saying, 'I shall kill you.' This is at once conveyed to the Demon King. Then accompanied by his followers, Rāvaṇa comes to the pond and plucks the flowers. He also hears the same voice. Trembling at it, he gives the flower to his wife Mandodarī to examine it thoroughly. After a careful examination, she finds a female child in it. Later, it is predicted by the astrologers that if she (Sītā) were to stay in Laṅkā further, the city would be destroyed. Mandadorī, therefore, summons Vibhīṣaṇa and tells him that the child found in the lotus is an incarnation of Ādilakṣmī and that she will be the wife of Rāma. As directed, she is kept in a box and it is shoved into the sea. Finally, she is found by Janaka in the furrow of the plough."

Though, this is a non-Vālmīki episode, this corroborates the Telugu saying that Sītā's birth led to the downfall of Laṅkā (*Sītā puṭṭi Laṅkaku cheṭu*).

The folk authors did not stop at merely narrating the story but appear to have derived satisfaction by inventing new stories or situations around the person of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is said that the hearsay report of a washerman had at last culminated in Rāma's abandoning Sītā, in spite of her pregnancy at the time. This seemed to be less convicing for a certain folk poet and he invented the following story :

"Śūrpaṇakkha, Rāvaṇa's sister, has not forgotten her love for Rāma though she has lost her mighty brother and several warriors in that terrible battle. She finds Sītā as a stumbling block in her way. So she comes to Ayodhyā in the guise of a mendicant and approaches Rāma who is just then starting for hunting. He, therefore, directs the mendicant to see Sītā who receives her warmly and presents her valuable gifts. But the presents are rejected. Instead, Sītā is asked to draw the picture of Rāvaṇa. Trembling with fear at this strange request, Sītā tells her that she never cared to look at Rāvaṇa, despite her stay in Laṅkā for about ten months. But finally, to satisfy her guest, Sītā draws only the toe of Rāvaṇa which was later completed by the mendicant. Afterwards, the mendicant approaches Brahmā and requests him to give life to that

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drawing of Rāvaṇa. Taking pity on her, Brahmā agrees to her request. Śūrpaṇakhā then retires to her place, leaving the drawing at Ayodhyā.

"Rāvaṇa's picture begins to tease Sītā by asking her to return to Laṅkā with him. The strange behaviour of the picture surprises everyone in the palace. It is unhurt though it is thrown into a well and flames. Disgusted and worried, Sītā places it under her bed, chanting the name of Rāma. It does not come out and hence she is temporarily relieved of the trouble. Meanwhile, Rāma returns from hunting, but no one dares to report to him the strange acts of the picture. Even Sītā is silent. That night, when Rāma is in the company of Sītā, Rāvaṇa's picture comes out and pushes Rāma away. This makes Rāma suspicious of his wife's chastity. And the result is that he sends Sītā to the forest against the entreaties of the inmates of the palace."

Here is another interesting story which is very popular and often sung by women. This story entitled Lakṣmaṇa's laughter (*Lakṣmaṇadevara Navvu*) is also narrated in the *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇam.*

After defeating Rāvaṇa, Rāma returns to Ayodhyā, along with his wife and brother Lakṣmaṇa. Later, Rāma was crowned in the presence of all the Gods, sages and others.

At the time of coronation, Lakṣmaṇa, at one stage, laughs which create a stir among the dignitaries present. Each one of them including Śiva thinks that Lakṣmaṇa laughs at him only and hence feel offended. Rāma too mistakes the laughter and gets wild against his brother. He, at once, draws his sword from the scabbard and demands of him the reason for his laughter. Then Lakṣmaṇa falls at his feet and explains as follows :

'While we were staying in a hut in the forest, one night, you (Rāma) were fast asleep. As usual, armed with bow and arrow, I was on the watch. All the creatues in the forest were also in deep sleep. Then I found to my great surprise *Nidrā devī* (goddess of sleep) weeping. I approached her and enquired the reason to which she replied that though the entire world was sleeping, he (Lakṣmaṇa) was awake.

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'Then I told her that I was in the service of my brother and sister-in-law and so I should not sleep. Further, I requested her to haunt my wife, Urmilā, so that she would sleep all through the day and night. Then she left. And again *Nidrā devī* has come and haunted me today. So, I laughed'. So saying, Lakṣmaṇa goes to sleep.

On hearing the story, Rāma repents and compliments his brother for his selfless service and spotlss love for him. He feels ashamed of his haste and desires to put an end to his own life with the same sword he has taken out from the scabbard. But he is prevented from doing so.

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JAIN RĀMĀYAṆAS AND THEIR SOURCE

By V.M. KULKARNI

Popularity of the story of Rāma

No work in Sanskrit literature has enjoyed a great popularity in India than the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. It is truly a popular epic; it has profoundly influenced the thought and poetry of the country for over two thousand years. It has coloured the Indian way of life. For all these centuries the story of Rāma has been vividly alive in the imagination of the men and women of all classes. Illiteracy has been no barrier to absorbing the story in all its fascinating detail. Besides the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, the story occurs in the *Mahābhārata* and in the various *Purāṇas*. We also have the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa,* the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa*. Many eminent Sanskrit poets and playwrights, including Bhāsa, Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti and Rājaśekhara, have, again and again, drawn the material for their poems and plays from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Teachers of the various religious schools refer to it and draw upon it to help them propagate religious and moral doctrines effectively among their followers. There are the Buddhist forms of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Jain forms of the story of Rāma also exist. Versions of the (Vālmīki) *Rāmāyaṇa* are found in the different languages of India. It has been translated into almost all Modern Indian Languages, as well as several other languages of the world. Then there are the forms of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that are known to exist outside India.

The story of Rāma in Jain Literature

The three principal characters of the story of Rāma in Jain literature are drawn from among the sixty-three *Śalākā-puruṣas*. They are Padma (another name of Rāma), Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa, who form the eighth set of Baladeva, Vāsudeva and Prativāsudeva. Of all the twenty-seven heroes they enjoy the highest popularity, and Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha stand next to them in popularity. That the story of Rāma is most popular with the Jains can be seen from the number of works which treat of it right from the third or fourth century A.D.

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down to the seventeenth century. Some of these *Caritas* and *Purāṇas* are in Prākṛt (designated as Jain Mahārāṣṭrī by Western scholar like Jacobi), some others in Sanskrit and a couple of them in *Apabhramśa*. The authors or poets of the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* are drawn from both the principal sects of the Jains, viz., Śvetāmbara and Digambara. Here is a list of the important Jain works which sing of the glory and geatness of Rāma :

1. *Paumacariya* of Vimala Sūrī (*circa*, end of the 3rd century or 4th century A.D.).
2. *Vāsudevahiṇḍi* of Sanghadāsa (not later than 600 A.D.).
3. *Padmapurāṇa* of Raviṣeṇa (678 A.D.).
4. *Pauma-cariu* of Svayambhū (middle of the 8th century A.D.)
5. *Caupaṇṇa-Mahāpurisa-cariya* of Śīlācārya (868 A.D.)
6. *Uttara-purāṇa* of Guṇabhadra (9th century A.D.).
7. *Bṛahatkathākośa* of Hariṣeṇa (931-32 A.D.).
8. *Mahāpurāṇa* of Puṣpadanta (965 A.D.).
9. *Kahāvalī* of Bhadreśvara (11th century A.D.).
10. *Yoga-Śāstra-svopajña-Vṛtti* of Hemacandra (latter half of the 12th century A.D.)
11. *Triṣaṣṭi-śalakāpuruṣa-carita* of Hemacandra (latter half of the 12th century A.D.).
12. *Śatruñjaya-māhātmya* of Dhaneśvara (14th century A.D.).
13. *Puṇyacandrodaya-purāṇa* of Kṛṣṇadāsa (1528 A.D.).
14. *Rāma-carita* of Devavijaya-gaṇin (1596 A.D.).
15. *Laghu-triṣaṣṭi-śalākā-puruṣa-carita* of Meghavijaya (second half of the 17th century A.D.).

The *Dhūrtākhyāna* of Haribhadra (750 A.D.) and the *Dharma Parīkṣa* of Amitagati (1014 A.D.) casually treat of the story of Rāma. *Jinaratnakośa* mentions some other Jain works which have the same subject-matter as the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These late works, which are in manuscript form and are not accessible to me, and which being very late, will have hardly anything new to say, are left out from the present study.

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The Inter-relation between the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*

Among the various Jain forms of the story of Rāma, Vimala Sūrī's *Paumacariya* is the first, chronologically speaking. The study of the different Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* clearly reveals that Raviṣeṇa, Svayambhū, Śīlācārya, Bhadreśvara, Hemacandra, Dhaneśvara, Devavijaya and Meghavijaya follow Vimala Sūrī. Raviṣeṇa nowhere states that his *Padma Purana* is based on Vimala Sūrī's *Paumacariya*. A comparative study of the two versions establishes firmly that Raviṣeṇa is heavily indebted to Vimala Sūri, his predecessor. Svayambhū expressly states that he has followed Raviṣeṇa in composing his *Paumacariu*. At the end of his version of the story of Rāma, Śīlācārya states : Thus is narrated, in brief, the life history of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, which is described at length in works like the *Pauma-cariya*. From this statement it follows that he has used Vimala Sūrī's work in giving his abridged version. Although Bhadreśvara does not indicate his source, a study of his version of the story of Rāma proves that he has adopted the story of Rāma as given by Vimala Sūrī, and that he very often borrows phrases and lines from him. Hemacandra does not care to mention his source for his two versions of the story of Rāma, but from a study of his versions we come to know that he has mainly based them on the works of Vimala Sūrī and Raviṣeṇa. Dhaneśvara's version follows very closely the tradition represented by Vimala Sūrī. Devavijaya himself says that he is following Hemacandra. Meghavijaya's *Laghu-Triṣaṣṭī* is an abridged version of Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭi-śalākā-puruṣa-carita*.

Guṇabhadra's version, which is largely dependent on Vālmīki, contains some features which have their parallels in the *Daśaratha Jātaka* and the version of Saṅghadāsa, and it has some traits peculiar to the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*. This conglomeration of different elements gives Guṇabhadra's version a new look and form. It is, therefore, regarded as another independent version, differing in several respects from the *Paumacariya*. Puṣpadanta, although he does not expressly state so, follows Guṇabhadra. Kṛṣṇadāsa is another writer who follows him. From the numebr of authors who follow Vimala Sūrī it is evident that his tradition has been highly popular among the Jains.

The versions of Saṅghadāsa and Hariṣeṇa are more related to the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki or the *Rāmopākhyān* of

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Mahābhārata than to the version of either Vimala Sūrī or Guṇabhadra. It would not be correct to speak of the schools of Vimala Sūrī and Guṇabhadra as Śvetāmbara and Digambara, for some Digambara writers too follows the so-called Śvetāmbara version of Vimala Sūrī.

This inter-relation between the various forms of the story of Rāma enables us to restrict our investigation of the problem of the source of the Jain-*Rāmāyaṇas* chiefly to the scrutiny of the traditions recorded in the *Pauma-cariya* and the *Uttarapurāṇa*.

Before undertaking this investigation it would be but proper to give here a brief and bare outline of the story of Rāma common to all the Jain forms.

Outline of the story of Rāma common to all the Jain forms

King Daśaratha, of the Ikṣvāku family, ruled over Ayodhyā. He was blessed with four sons, called Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughana. There was, at the time, a king named Janaka who ruled over Videha. He had a daughter by name Sītā. Janaka gave her in marriage to Rāma.

There was a mighty king called Rāvaṇa who ruled over Laṅkā. He was fascinated by the wondrous beauty of Sītā. He carried her off by force to Laṅkā. Rāma was stricken with profound sorrow at this misfortune.

A Vānara prince, Sugrīva, had been deprived of his rightful place in Kiṣkindhā. He sought Rāma's alliance. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa helped Sugrīva regain the kingdom of Kiṣkindhā. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and the army of Sugrīva marched against Laṅkā. Vibhīṣaṇa, the righteous brother of Rāvaṇa, did his best to persuade Rāvaṇa to return Sītā honourably to Rāma, but in vain. He deserted Rāvaṇa and formed an alliance with Rāma. A terrible war was fought between the armies of Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Finally, Rāvaṇa was killed; Vibhīṣaṇa was made king of Laṅkā; and Rāma was reunited with his lost queen.

After vindicating his honour Rāma, with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, returned to Ayodhyā, his capital. Rāma had 8,000 queens, among whom Sītā and three others were the principal ones. Lakṣmaṇa had 16,000 queens, among whom Pṛthvīsundarī and

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eight others were the principal ones. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa very deeply loved each other. After Lakṣmaṇa's death, Rāma became a monk, practised austerities, obtained perfect knowledge; and, in due course, attained to *mokṣa*. Lakṣmaṇa, as he did not accept the path laid down by the Jinas, sank into hell. Rāvaṇa too, for his lapse from the code of correct behaviour, had to go to hell. It was laid down that both of them after passing through many births would attain to liberation. Sītā after leading the life of an *Āryikā*, was reborn in heaven, but she too would in course of time obtain *mokṣa*.

It is obvious that, except for the number of the queens of Rāma and of Lakṣmaṇa, the killing of Rāvaṇa by Lakṣmaṇa and the Jinistic conclusion, *this story of Rāma is basically and essentially the same as that found in the Hindu versions of Vālmīki and Vyāsa.*

The object of this paper

It is generally believed that the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki presents the oldest version of the story of Rāma. But some scholars hold that the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki has for its source the story of Rāma as found in the *Daśaratha Jātaka* and a few other *Jātakas*. This view is stoutly refuted by other scholars who hold that the *Jātakas* are not really older than the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but present only a distorted version of it. As far as the present problem of the source of the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* is concerned, the question of these *Jātakas* does not assume importance as the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* do not show any appreciable acquaintance with the story of Rāma as given by these *Jātakas*. And the earliest Jain version of the story of Rāma, as found in the *Pauma-cariya*, belongs to the end of the third century or to the fourth century A.D. That is, the earliest Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* falls centuries after the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. The authors of the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*, however, claim that the story of Rāma, as it appears in Jain literature, preserves an independent tradition anterior to that of the well-known (Hindu) *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is proposed to investigate thoroughly in this paper whether this claim is justified, or whether the Jain version of the story of Rāma is derivative being borrowed from the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki or the Hindu *Rāmāyaṇa*, in general, with suitable changes or whether it partly preserves some features of a very ancient tradition prior to that of Vālmīki and partly borrows

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some features of *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, on account of their vast popularity among the masses.

The tradition regarding the source of the *Pauma-cariya*

Vimala Sūrī himself records the tradition thus : the *Pauma-cariya* was in the form of a list of names and was handed down in regular succession from teacher to disciple.[1] It was first told by Lord Mahāvīra to Indrabhūti Gautama, who retold it to his disciple. It became known to generations of people through a succession of *Sādhus*.[2] Rahu was his grand-teacher and Vijaya was his teacher. He composed this Rāma-carita, 530 years after the Nirvāṇa of Lord Mahāvīra, having heard (from his '*Guru*') the lives of Nārāyaṇa and Baladeva, as given in the *Pūrvas*.[3]

Scrutiny of the tradition

It is very difficult to accept this whole tradition as being founded on facts. It may be true that the poet had before him a

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[1] नामावलियनिबद्धं आयरियपरंपराबयं सब्वं।
वोच्छामि पउमचरियं अदाणुपुव्विं समासेण।।
—पउमचरियं 1-8

[2] एयं वीरजिणेण रामचरियं सिट्ठं महत्थं पुरा
पच्छाऽऽखँडलभूइणा उ कहियं सीसाण धम्मासयं।
भूओ साहुपरंपराए सयलं लोए ठियं पायडं
एत्ताहे विमलेण सुत्तसहियं गाहानिबद्धं कयं।।
—पउमचरियं 118, 101

[3] पंचेव य वाससया दुसमाए तीस-वरिस-संजुत्ता।
वीरे सि द्धिमुंउवगए तओ निबद्ध इमं चरियं।।
—पउमचरियं 118-193

and

राहू नामायरिओ ससमयपरसमयगहियसब्भावो।
विजओ य नस्स सीसो नाइलकुलवंसनंदियरो।।
सीसेण तस्स रइयं राहवचरियं तु सूरिविमलेणं।
सोऊणं पुव्वगए नारायख-सीरिचरियाइं।।
—पउमचरियं 118-117-118

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'*nāmāvalī*' and that his teacher had elucidated it to him. But that the story was first told by Lord Mahāvīra himself is difficult to believe. For in the Jain canon we do not find the story of Rāma recorded anywhere, although the story of Kṛṣṇa who lived centuries after Rāma—according to the statement of the Jain writers themselves—occurs in one of the sacred texts of the Jain Canon.[4] The *Nandi Sūtra* and the *Anuyogadvāra Sūtra* (forming part of the Jain Canon) mention Bhārata and *Rāmāyaṇa*, but they refer not to any Jain (Mahā) Bhārata or Jain *Rāmāyaṇa*, but to the well-known epics of the 'heretical' Hindus. It is not likely that such a well-known story which convincingly illustrates the disastrous consequences of a passion for another's wife should find no place in their sacred works. Although it is said that the lives of Nārāyaṇa and Baladeva were given in the *Pūrva* texts, we are unfortunately not in a position to verify the truth of the statement, as these *Pūrva*-texts are irrecoverably lost. Again the traditions recorded by different Jain poets in their *Purāṇas*, dealing with the lives of sixty-three *Śalākā-puruṣas* (or *Mahāpuruṣas*), are conflicting. Even the writers of the later Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*, such as Hemacandra, do not appear to have taken this tradition of Vimala Sūrī seriously. Otherwise, how could they effect modifications in the principal narrative which Lord Mahāvīra is said to have told to his pupils? They would have then remained contented with merely adding poetic descriptions of cities, parks, rivers, sunrise, moonrise etc. They could not have tampered with the principal narrative of Rāma believed to have been delivered by Lord Mahāvīra himself. It appears that the poet traces the source of the story to Lord Mahāvīra merely in order to invest it with authority and sanctity, and the statement that the lives of Nārāyaṇa and Baladeva were given in the *Pūrva*-texts is just intended to induce devout readers to accept the story as true when he found it necessary to give the followers of the Jain faith a worthy substitute for the enormously popular epic of Vālmīki. We have many parallels for this in Hindu literature. For example, *Manu Smṛti* (Chapter I) traces its origin to the Creator, so too does Bharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra* (Chapter I). Such traditions are introduced in order to impress on the public that the works concerned possess divine authority. Vimala Sūrī, being a Jain,

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4 *Antagadadasāo* (Varga III).

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introduces a tradition representing Lord Mahāvīra, the Jina, as the expositor of the story of Rāma, and thus claims authenticity for his story. That Vimala Sūrī is considerably indebted to Vālmīki, whose *Rāmāyaṇa* was used by him when he composed his own work, should be crystal clear from the discussion that follows.

The version of the story of Rāma attacked by Vimala Sūrī

The author of the *Pauma-cariya* does not specifically mention the name of the poet or the name of his work which, according to him, is full of inconsistencies, lies and absurdities[5], and to replace which he himself undertakes to narrate the true life of Rāma. But the various points of doubt he has raised clearly indicate that he has in mind Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. The questions or doubts that presume versions of *Rāmāyaṇa* and the corresponding passages from the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki which give rise to these doubts are set forth here :

(*a*) How were the great *Rākṣasas*, though very strong, killed by the *Vānaras* (monkeys)?—PC.[6] 105. How was that mighty hero of the *Rākṣasas*, viz. Rāvaṇa, defeated by the *Vānaras*, who are *triyak*—i.e. lower animals?—P.C. 3.9.

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa does represent the *Vānaras* as lower animals, e.g. Yuddha-kāṇḍa Book VI (Canto 4, vv. 63-67) speaks of their 'kilakila' cries and the lashing of their tails;

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[5] सीहो मएण निहओ साणेण य कुंजरो जहा भग्गो।
तह विवरीयपयत्थं कईहि रामायणं रइयं।।
—पउमचरियं 2-116

Again,

[6] पउमचरियं महायस अहयं इच्छामि परिफुडं सोउं।
उप्पाइया पसिद्धी कुसत्यवादीहि विवरीया।।
—पउमचरियं 3-8

and,

न य रक्खसो त्ति भण्णाइ दसाणणो णेय आमिसाहारों।
अलियं ति सव्वमेयं भणंति जं कुकइणो मूढा।।
—पउमचरियं 3-15

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Sundara-kāṇḍa Book V (Canto 53, vv. 5-8) speaks of the tail of Hanumat, the *Vānara* hero; and the same Book (Canto 10, v. 55) clearly mentions that he belonged to the monkey-class : 'He struck his tail on the ground, kissed his tail, rejoiced, jumped about, sang, ran about, went up the pillars and fell down, thus showing in many ways his monkey-nature.

Rāvaṇa's defeat was due to the valour of the *Vānara* chiefs and the *Vānara* army, no less than to the valour or Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. This is evident from the description of the single combats and battles as given in the Yuddha-kāṇḍa. It tells us that Sugrīva killed three of the biggest giants of Rāvaṇa's side, viz. Kumbha, Virūpākṣa and Mahodara. Hanumat brought down Rāvaṇa's son, Akṣa, and among the most important *Rākṣasas* he killed were Devāntaka. Triśiras and Nikumbha. Nala, Nīla, Aṅgada and other great heroes had also many exploits to their credit. In fact, excepting Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa with his four counsellors, the whole of the army led by them against the *Rākṣasas* consisted of lower animals who ultimately caused the downfall of Rāvaṇa.

(*b*) It is reported in the popular scriptures that all the *Rākṣasas* led by Rāvaṇa used to eat meat, and drink blood and marrow.

Sundara-kāṇḍa (V. Canto 5, w. 11 ff) tells us of Hanumat's visit to Rāvaṇa's Hall where he found various kinds of birds' and beasts' flesh kept ready for Rāvaṇa's consumption and cups of wine. In the Araṇya-kāṇḍa (III, Canto 2, vv. 12-13), the *Rākṣasa* Virādha himself tells us that he used to seize a saint to make a meal of him and that he would quaff the blood of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. In Araṇya-kāṇḍa (III, Canto 19, vv. 19-20) we are told of Śūrpaṇakhā's desire to drink the blood of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā. Araṇya-kāṇḍa (III, Canto 38, v. 3) speaks of Mārīca as one given to eating the flesh of Ṛṣis. In the Sundara-kāṇḍa (V. Canto 22, v. 9) Rāvaṇa addresses Sītā as follows : If after two months' time you do not bend to your lover's will, my cooks shall mince your limbs and serve you for my morning meal". Uttara-kāṇḍa (VII, Canto 10, vv. 38-39) tells us that Kumbhakarṇa had eaten seven *apsarās* and ten followers of Indra.

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(*c*) It is reported that Rāvaṇa's brother Kumbhakarṇa used to sleep for six months without a break, and even though his body was crushed by big elephants and his ears were filled with potfuls of oil, he would not wake up, he could not hear the sound of drums beaten near him, nor would he get up from his bed if the period of six months was not over. When he got up, being overpowered by fierce hunger, he would devour whatever was near him at the time, such as elephants and buffaloes. Having filled his belly by devouring gods, men, elephants and the like, he would again go to bed for another six months...

This statement of Vimala Sūrī is based on Yuddha-kāṇḍa, Canto 60, vv. 23-24 :

(*d*) It is said that Indra, when defeated in battle by Rāvaṇa, was bound in chains and taken to Laṅkā. How could anyone take Indra captive, Indra who ruled over Jambūdvīpa with its gods and men? One would be reduced to heaps of ashes at the mere thought of attacking Indra who has Airāvata, the elephant-jewel, and Vajra and the thunder-bolt, at his command. At that rate we might as well affirm that the lion is overcome by the deer, the elephant by the dog! PC. 2, 113-116.

How Indra was overpowered by Rāvaṇa's son and taken captive to Laṅkā, and how Brahmā, at the request of the gods, then waited in deputation on Rāvaṇa, etc. is described in detail in Uttara-kāṇḍa, Cantos 29-30.

(e) It is reported that Rāma during his sojourn in the forest killed the (wondrous) golden deer. PV 3, v. 10.

This incident of the golden deer is described at length by Vālmīki in the Araṇya-kāṇḍa, Cantos 43 and 44.

(f) It is said that Rāma treacherously killed Vālin in order to oblige (his ally) Sugrīva and win Sutārā for him (Sugrīva). PC. 3 v. 10.

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Rāma's alliance with Sugrīva and his killing of Vālin with the discharge of a single arrow from a covert position is described in the Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa, Cantos 8-26.

(*g*) It is said that the *Vānaras* constructed a bridge across the ocean! PC. 3, v. 12.

In the Yuddha-kāṇḍa (VI Canto 22) we are told by Vālmīki that Nala, who inherited a share of his father Viśvakarman's celestial art and skill, with the aid of hosts of *Vānaras*, who uprooted mountains, rocks etc., and overthrew them into the ocean built a bridge of wondrous strength across the sea.

We thus find that the various doubts regarding the life of Rāma raised by Śreṇika have full support in the passages of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, and we, therefore, arrive at the legitimate conclusion that Vimala Sūrī had in his mind, at the time of composing his *Paumacariya*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki.

Vimala Sūrī's indebtedness to Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*

Vimala Sūrī puts down Vālmīki as a liar and accuses him of presenting perverted and false account of Rāma's life and undertakes to narrate the true biography of Rāma as handed down by unbroken tradition. A comparative study of his work and the Hindu epic, however, reveals, in spite of remarkable divergences, alterations, modifications and omissions, the profound influence of Vālmīki over Vimala Sūrī. The latter follows Vālmīki as far as the principal features of the story of Rāma are concerned. Rāma's wedding with Sītā, Bharata's nomination or designation to the throne of Ayodhyā by Daśaratha, Rāma's exile into forest with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the Rākṣasa Chief of Laṅkā : the sending of Hanumat as a messenger to bring the tidings of Sītā after Rāma's alliance with Sugrīva, the fights with Rāvaṇa and his downfall, the bringing home of Sītā, the scandal-mongering in which the citizens of Ayodhyā indulged, the repudiation of Sītā, the lamentations of Rāma, and the birth of twin sons to Sītā. These landmarks in the story of Rāma are common to both the epics, notwithstanding numerous divergences in the details.

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We point here to certain noteworthy minor things which are highly eloquent of Vālmīki's influence on Vimala Sūrī :

(a) Padma is the name of Rāma in the poem; yet the names of Rāma, Rāghava, Raghunātha occur very frequently.

(b) Śrīśaila is the personal name of Hanumat; but the name Hanumat is very often met with in the poem.

(c) Pavanañjaya and Añjanā Sundarī were, we are told the names of Hanumat's parents; but later on the poet uses the names Pavana and Añjanā.

(d) The names of Sītā's twin sons were Anaṅga-lavaṇa and Madanānkuśa; but the names Lavaṇa (or Lava) and Aṅkuśa (which have close affinity with the Lava and Kuśa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*) are used frequently enough.

(e) Bhānukarṇa is the name of Kumbhakarṇa in the poem but the poet also uses the name Kumbhakarṇa very often.

(f) Sutārā is the name of Tārā, the wife of Sugrīva, yet the name of Tārā is used more often.

(g) Indra who, according to Vimala Sūrī, was the overlord of the Vidyādharas and not the chief among the gods, is often called 'Surendra', 'Surādhipati', 'Devendra' and 'Surapati' (see Cantos 12 and 13). This one fact alone is a strong or compelling proof of the profound influence which Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* had on the author of the *Pauma-cariya.*

(h) On a close comparison of the verses which treat of the same subject, we do not find any remarkable verbal resemblance between the two epics, although occasionally we come across rare *Subhāṣita*-like lines that seem to be borrowed by Vimala from his predecessor. For example,

(1) मरणान्तानि वैराणि...। –वाल्मीकिरामायणम्, 6-10-9-25
मरणंझाइं हवंति वेराणि। –पउमचरियं 75-1

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(2) पुत्रकामश्च पुत्रान्वै धनकामी धनानि च।
—वाल्मीकिरामायणम् —6-128-106

पुत्तत्थी.... पुत्तं लहइ धणत्थी महादणं।
—पउमचरियं — 118.14-15

(3) समागम्य प्रवासान्ते रमन्ते सह बान्धवैः।
—वाल्मीकिरामायणम् — 6-128-111

लहइ परदेसगमणे समागमं चेव बंधूणं।
—पउमचरियं — 118-96

It is, however, clear that such striking resemblances between the two epics are very rare, and that Vimala Sūrī is not a slavish imitator of his predecessor in diction and style.

On the whole, Vimala Sūrī's work was deeply influenced by the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki.

In undertaking the composition of the *Pauma-cariya* the poet had a twofold aim : (i) to present faithfully the life of Rāma and (ii) to propagate the teachings of Lord Mahāvīra zealously. With this twofold aim he removes exaggerated and incredible elements from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, offers realistic inter-relations, rids the story of the divine elements, elevates the characers of Kaikeyī, Rāvaṇa and some others, purges the story of its Brahmanical atmosphere and creates a Jain atmosphere in its place; and uses this immensely popular story as an excellent means for reaching the common people to propagate Jain ideals and doctrines, especially, the doctrine of *Ahimśa*. The additions, omissions and modifications effected by Vimala Sūri naturally turn the story of Rāma into a Jain *Rāmāyaṇa*. Beneath the cover of these changes, we, however, detect the source, vis. Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Vimala Sūrī draws upon it freely.

In his work *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas*, D.E. Sen advances an interesting thesis regarding an independent southern legend about Rāvaṇa. The thesis is based on Hemacandra's version of Rāma's story (which is adopted from the *Paumacariya*). Since the Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* begins with the description of the *Rākṣasas* and the *Vānaras* and introduces Rāma only in the later chapters, and since we find in it elaborate descriptions of the dynasties of the *Rākṣasas* and the *Vānaras* and many legends and stories about them, and since the story of Rāma is rather short and since it depicts Rāvaṇa's high character and a majestic

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command over passions, worthy of a sage, we are justified in inferring that in the Dravidian tradition, the *Rākṣasas* and the *Vānaras* had a far greater hold on popular fancy than the story of Rāma himself and that Rāvaṇa was the real hero of the Dravidian legend.

This view is untenable. The difference between the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Jain Rāmāyaṇa* in the treatment of the character of Rāvaṇa, and in the general account of the *Rākṣasa* and *Vānara* families, can be explained as being due to difference of purpose and emphasis. It is not necessary to assume the existence of an independent Rāvaṇa legend as a hypothesis to explain these differences. There has to be independent evidence to prove the existence of such a legend. Therefore D.E. Sen's view that there was a Southern independent Dravidian Rāvaṇa legend cannot be accepted.

As for this problem of the source of the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*, we must investigate the Digambara version of Guṇabhadra, for the two versions of Vimala Sūri and Guṇabhadra markedly differ from each other in regard to the story, the characterisation etc. Guṇabhadra does not follow Raviṣeṇa, his Digambara predecessor, but it is more likely that he, like his teacher Jinasena, who followed *kavi* Parameṣṭhi or Parameśvara in composing his *Ādi-purāṇa*, followed *kavi* Parameṣṭhi or Parameśvara in completing his teacher's unfinished *Mahā-purāṇa* by adding to it his *Uttara-purāṇa*. But even that leaves unsolved the problem of the source of some very stricking features such as Daśaratha's rule over Vārāṇasī instead of Ayodhyā, Sītā being the daughter of Rāvaṇa and Mandodarī, Śūrpaṇakhā's visit to Sītā as Rāvaṇa's *dūtī*, Daśaratha informing Rāma of Sītāpaharaṇa etc., which we find in his version. Pt. Premi has suggested the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Daśaratha Jātaka* as the sources of some of the novel features in Guṇabhadra's version. Dr. Narasimhachar appears to agree with Pt. Premi on this question. It is not possible to agree with these scholars for the story of Sītā's birth as given in the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* is fantastic and is greatly different from that given by Guṇabhadra, according to whom Sītā was born of Mandodarī as a daughter of Rāvaṇa. Again, the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* is of a very much later date than Guṇabhadra's *Uttara-purāṇa* for *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* came later than the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (the 14th or 15th century). It cannot thus be taken as a possible

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source of Guṇabhadra's Rāma story. The *Daśaratha Jātaka* is definitely older than Guṇabhadra's *Uttara-purāṇa*. The Jataka speaks of Daśaratha as a ruler of Vārāṇasī, and Guṇabhadra represents him as shifting his capital from Vārāṇasī to Ayodhyā. But this is too slender a thread to connect the two stoies. The Jātaka speaks of Rāma and Sītā as brother and sister, staying in the Himālaya for years together at Daśaratha's suggestion and of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, brother and sister. All this is absent in the Jain version. So, properly speaking we cannot point to the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa* and *Daśaratha Jātakas* as Guṇabhadra's source for his Rāma-story.

We might account for some of these striking features in a different way. The birth of Sītā was a mystery, according to *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*. Guṇabhadra wanted to give a realistic interpretation of her birth. He makes Sītā the daughter of Rāvaṇa and Mandodarī. He gives a reason for Sītā's being abandoned by her parents and describes how Janaka and his wife Vasudhā come across this foundling. This change has something dramatic about it. A father falling in love with his own daughter, being unaware of the fact that she is his own daughter, is not psychologically improbable. The names Sahasra-grīva, Śata-grīva, Vimśati-grīva, etc., as the ancestors of Rāvaṇa, were probably invented with a view to making the name Daśagrīva not sound utterly strange or fantastic.

Guṇabhadra's version agees to a considerable extent with the *Hindu Rāmāyaṇa*. The divergences it shows are not such as to lead us to believe that they preserve any features of the ancient ballads about Rāma, which had gained currency through the bards before Vālmīki gave them a dignified literary form.

The reasons for not accepting the Jain vesrion as being truer to the original oral tradition than the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* may briefly be stated as follows :

(i) Chronologically the Jain vesrions come definitely later than the Hindu Rāmāyaṇa. The later a work in its date the less probable it is that it embodies the original story/ legend more truthfully.

(ii) The traditions regading the source of the story of Rāma as recorded by the Jains in their works are conflicting. If the story of Rāma was told by Mahāvīra, it should have found a place in the sacred works of the Jains.

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The story of Kṛṣṇa is found in their canonical texts. It is not easy to explain the absence of the story of Rāma in the canon unless we hold that it was taken up later by the Jain poets in order to popularize the Jain teachings.

(iii) The Jain versions unmistakably point to the influence of the *Hindu Rāmāyaṇa.*

(iv) The Jain works find fault with the fanciful and highly exaggerated descriptions in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as absurd. This feature of the Jain works indicating the growing spirit of rationalism reveals that they are comparatively late in date.

(v) The Jain versions idealize the characters of Kaikeyi, Rāvaṇa and Vālin. If their representation of these characters was more faithful to the original legend it would be difficult to understand how Vālmīki could distort the idealism of the original, and give touches of realism in representing the part played by Kaikeyi in maneuvering Rāma's exile, and in showing that Rāma slew Vālin in a manner not befitting a super-human hero. In view of Vālmīki's intense desire to idealiase the characters of Rāma and represent him as an ideal warrior, an ideal son, an ideal husband, and an ideal king, it is difficult to understand Vālmīki's motives in slightly degrading the character of Rāma in the episode of his fight with Vālin, as also in some others such as his killing of Tāḍakā and Khara, unless we assume that Vālmīki had felt compelled to retain these incidents because he had found them as part of the popular tradition.

(vi) The divergences which the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* show from the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* are easily accounted for as proceeding from artistic or religious or ethical motives, thus dispensing with the hypothesis that the Jain versions preserve more faithfully the ancient Rāma story that was prevalent prior to Vālmīki.

In conclusion, I would firmly state that the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki and Vyāsa is the source of the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA : ITS CHARACTER, GENESIS, HISTORY, EXPANSION AND EXODUS*

By S. K. CHATTERJI*

After 660 B.C. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* takes its present form. Mention of *Cyavana* in *ŚB.*, already a legendary sage, whose ascetic power enabled him to take up the form of a decrepit and shrivelled man (later on in the *Mbh.*, the story became that he was covered up by an ant-hill-*Vālmīka*). Śaryāta, a descendant of Manu and his *grāma* or clan. His young men and daughter Sukanyā pelted with clods the shrivelled up Cyavana. Cyavana's wrath. Ś. comes and bestows Sukanyā to C. as an appeasement. S. looks after C. The Aśvins-S. obtains boon of healing and youth for C. from the Aśvins–Cyavana tells the Aśvins how they were missing certain divine rights in a sacrifice and told them the remedy. C. a descendant of Bhṛgu.

Vālmīki—a descendant of C., (Kṛttivāsa, 1400 A.D., V—son of C). c. 5000 B.C. Vālmīki, Vālmīka=? *formica* : has the 'Cyavana in ant-hill legend' became transferred to Vālmīki because of his name? Aśvaghosa, 1st cen. A.D., mentions cyavana as a predecessor of poet Vālmīki. Vālmīki, called a Grammarian (*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*—200 B.C.), because he was *an innovator in language-śloka, Sru,* an Eastern Skt. form. The popularising of *Śloka* verse. Vālmīki-first conscious and sophisticated Poet—*Ādi-Kavi*—deliberate creator of a series of ideal Characters—Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Daśaratha and the rest. The style and story of the *Ram.* v. that of the *Mbh.*

The Rāma Story—the Ayodhyā/Vārāṇasī-Harem Intrigue–the D. Jātaka Verses-Rāma Paṇḍita an ideal "Wise Man" not given to grief–that is the nucleus or germ, before 500 B.C. (time of *U. Jātaka*).

* Resume of Professor S.K. Chatterji's Paper.

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Vālmīki *created* the full story–3 main component parts :

(1) Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Daśaratha, Kaikeyī, Bharata–Rāma marrying Sītā–Coronation–1st nucleus. The Himālayas. (Character of Sītā modelled on that of Sāvitrī and Damayantī? of Rāma as a hero on that of Arjuna?)

(2) Sojourn in Daṇḍakāraṇya—

Virādha-Śūrpaṇakhā-Rāvaṇa-Mārīca–the Abduction of Sītā–(jaṭāyus)–Sītā in Laṅkā. Influence of Greek Legend (Helen, Paris, Menelaw on the Rām. Abduction Story? (of Homer and India—Dion Chnysostom).

(a) *The Rākṣasas-Asuras*/Dramidas-civilised people, anti-Āryan.

(b) *The Vanaras*-Negroid/Primitive Austric Peoples of S. India-Lithic-stone implements, branches of trees. The *Rākṣasas*-Polycheirous and Polycaphalous Braiareos and other Giants from Greece. 10-headed, 20-handed Rāvaṇa and the Magic working and abnormal bodies of *Rākṣasas* of India?

(3) The *Vānaras*–Hanumān, Sugrīva-Vālin-pact with Sugrīva-Hanumān in Laṅkā–Building of the bridge. The Laṅkā War—(Indrajit, Kumbhakarna, Lakṣmaṇa, His wounding by Rāvaṇa, H. and Gandhamādana—slaying of Rāvaṇa–Sītā's ordeal–Return of Rāma, Sītā, L. and their friends by the Puṣpaka—Coronation in Ayodhyā.

The composite Rāma story created by Vālmīki completed in its essentials by 2nd century A.D.—Jain *Pauma-cariu*–Buddhist work by *Kumāralāta* mentions *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Story began to expand, addition of new episodes, new versions etc. from after its start as a *Rāma saga* as composed by Vālmīki.

Uttara-kāṇḍa : Vālmīki himself made one of the characters. More and more episodes.

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**Rāma became linked up with Viṣṇu and Sītā with Śrī as their *avatāras*—after 2nd century A.D.? Greater and greater popularity of *the Rāma Avatāra Concept.*

The Social Ideals—Family Relationship—as introduced by Vālmīki made for its popularity over other great stories—like (1) Purūravas-Urvaśī, (2) Sāvitrī-Satyavān, (3) Nala-Damayantī, (4) Tapatī-Samvaraṇa, and (5) Vāsavadattā-Udayana.

Various new episodes and stories—newer and newer treatments of the Rāma-Sītā story.

Exodus of the Rāma Saga (as Vālmīki's poem also outside India, from after 2nd/3rd century A.D. with Brahmans and Buddhists, Sailors and Seamen, businessmen, settlers etc. Newer and newer versions and matters added—

(i) in Indo-China—among the Mons and the Khmers and the Chams—among the Thais—Siamese and Laos—the *Rāma-Kir* (-Kien)—the Burmese—then the Vietnamese.

(ii) in *Malaya* (*Hikayat Rāma*) and Indonesia—Sumatrans, Sundas, Javanese, Madurese, Balinese—Lombokians—the *Rāmāyaṇa*–the *Wayangs*—the Semar etc. the *Philipinos.*

(iii) in Sri Laṅkā.

(iv) in Central Asia-among the Khotanese, the Sogdians etc.

(v) in Tibet, in Mongolia.

(vi) in China, in Korea, in Japan.

(vii) in Modern times—the Western Skt. studies–Russia, countries of Western Europe.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN THAI THEATRE

By CHAMLONG SARAPADNUKE

Rāmāyaṇa in Thailand

Rāmāyaṇa is well known to the Thai people as *Rāmakien*, the name being derived from the term *Rāmakīrti*. According to their knowlege, it was written by Śrī Vālmīki 2000 years ago.[1]

The *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Rāmakien* has been much appreciated by the Thai people for ages. In Ayudhya period (B.E. 1952—2310: 1409-1767 A.D.) it was regarded as the sacred story and is because of the story *Rāmāyaṇa* that the first King of Ayudhyā was named Rāma and its capital, Ayudhyā. The *Rāmāyaṇa* story has given much pleasure to both the grown-ups and the children. A lot of things in the story such as the bravery of Hanumān, the ungratefulness of Torapi (Darvi), the breaking of Vāli's promise and the faithfulness of Sītā, are great mottoes in Thailand. Most of the Thai People, in the past generally knew the *Rāmāyaṇa* story through oral tradition.[2]

The *Rāmāyaṇa* written by eminent *Rāmāyaṇa* Scholars in Thailand is divided into 7 Kāṇḍas or sections.[3]

(1) *Bāla Kāṇḍa* dealing with the events beginning with Vālmīki's asking Nārada to tell the story of *Rāmāyaṇa* and ending with Sītā's marriage and her going to Ayodhyā.

(2) *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa* dealing with the events beginning with Rāma's preparations for being appointed King by Daśaratha and ending with Rāma's journey in the forest.

(3) *Āraṇyaka Kāṇḍa* dealing with the events of Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa going into the Daṇḍaka forest up to

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1 Sathien koses, *Upakarana Rāmakien*, (Bannagara Press, Bangkok B.E. 2515), p. 4.

2 Ruang-U-rai Kusalaṣaya and others, *The Thair Language for Secondary School Teacher* (Saranyoo Press, Bangkok, B.E. 2505), p. 542.

3 Sathien Koses, *op. cit.*, p. 9

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Thosakan (Rāvaṇa) abducting Sītā from Rāma and Rāma's and Lakṣmaṇa's searching for her.

(4) *Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa* dealing with the events from Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa finding Hanumān, up to Hanumān volunteering to give the ring.

(5) *Sundara Kāṇḍa* dealing with the events from Hanumān volunteering to give the ring upto the burning of Laṅkā city.

(6) *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* dealing with the events from Rāma resting at the foot of the Mahendra Mountain (Bematiran in Thai) and going to Laṅkā city for war up to his taking Sītā back to Ayodhyā.

(7) *Uttara Kāṇḍa* dealing with the families of *Asuras* and monkeys.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* story as found in Thailand, according to the great scholar of Thai literature, Phraya Anumanrajthon, did not come directly from India, but it came from Indonesia about 900 years ago. At that time on a lot of ruins were depicted the scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. One of the most outstanding examples is found in the stone shrine called 'Parasart Hin Pimai' in the Pimai district, Nakhon Rachasima Province, north-east of Bangkok. In king Ramakhamhang's inscriptions was mentioned the cave of Rāma and Sītā.[4]

At a later time, when Taksin became King of Dhonburi (B.E. 2310: 1767 A.D.), he wrote the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Thai verses. They are of 2012 verses in 4 volumes namely :

1. Phra Mangkuta practising the art of bow.
2. Hanuman courting Nang Vanarin.
3. King Malivaraj adjudicating the case.
4. Thosakan (Daśakaṇṭha) setting up the ceremony of making sand acid to be his weapon.[5]

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4 Ruang-U-rai Kusalasaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 533-535

5 Dhanit Yubo, *Introduction to Khon* (Department of Fine Arts, Bangkok 2496), pp. 103-104.

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In the reign of King Rāma I (B.E. 2328—1785 A.D.) he, with many other poets, composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Thai verses. The book consists of 2976 pages, and there are about 50,286 verses in it. It is the complete *Rāmāyaṇa* that we have in Thailand.[6] It is said that in the reign of King Rāma II (B.E. 2352: 1809 A.D.) the King thought that the *Rāmāyaṇa* story that was written in the reign of King Rāma I was such a long story that it could not be adopted on the stage. To make it suitable and easy for acting on the stage, the *Rāmāyaṇa* story was rewritten by him. Some parts of the story were omitted. So it is shorter than the one written in the reign of King Rāma I. It consists of 14,300 verses.[7]

It appears that in the reign of King Rāma IV, the King himself wrote the *Rāmāyaṇa* story of his own in Thai verses. There are 1664 verses.[8]

At a still later time, King Rāma Vi (B.E. 2453: 1910 A.D.) wrote the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in the form of dialogue. It was divided into six parts, namely:

(1) Episode of Sītā being taken from Ayodhyā.

(2) Episode of burning Laṅkā city.

(3) Episode of Bibhek being expelled.

(4) Episode of making a road leading to Laṅkā city.

(5) Episode of the beginning of the battle in Laṅkā city.

(6) Episode of Nāgapāśa.

It is the book of 154 pages.[9] It was printed in B.E. 2464[10] (1921 A.D.)

Appreciation of Rāmāyaṇa in Thai Literature

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is one of the important stories in Thai literature. It has been an interesting one and the Thai students learnt in schools.

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6 *Ibid.*, p. 105.
7 *Ibid.*, p. 107.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 108.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
10 Seni Vilavan, The Thai Language for the Secondary School Teachers (Vatnabanich Press, Bangkok, 2517), p. 454.

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The *Rāmāyaṇa* books that have been well known to the Thai people are :

(1) King Taksin's *Rāmāyaṇa* (in verses)

(2) King Rāma I's *Rāmāyaṇa* (in verses)

(3) King Rāma II's *Rāmāyaṇa* (in verses)

(4) King Rāma IV's *Rāmāyaṇa* (in verses)

(5) King Rāma IV's *Rāmāyaṇa* (in dialogue)

(6) King Rāma VI's *Rāmāyaṇa* (in dialogue, songs).

Importance of Rāmāyaṇa in Thai Theatre

The *Rāmāyaṇa* plays an important role in Thai Theatre. It is shown on stage in the form of 'Nang Yai' and 'Khon.'

The Nong Yai ("Nang" literally "skin" or "hide" and "Yai", "big"), or transparencies, for entertainment which still finds favour amongst a large section of the public. The transparencies are frequently real work of art. Figures such as those of Rāma, Sītā, Hanumān and so on are beautifully drawn and embossed upon pieces of skin and beautifully painted, so that they form perfect decorative pictures. They are each mounted on two sticks by which the transparent picture could be held up. A large screen of white sheet is fixed up with lights behind, and the transparencies are displayed against the screen, either from within or without. These pictures represent various characters in the drama, principally those in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The versions of the drama played are recited by a chorus. The transparencies are moved about in accordance with the words by men who are generally accomplished dancers, as they are required to dance while they move the pictures.

There is, however, another kind of Nang known as the *Nang Talung*. The figures of Nang Talung are smaller and some are so constructed as to have one of the arms movable.[11]

The music is an important feature of the dramas as Nang Yai and Nang Talung. It is the Thai music according to the Thai tradition.

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11 Mattani Rutnin, *The Siamese Theatre*, Bangkok, 2518, p. 4.

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And such shows are often seen at some important cremations.

The Khon or masked play is a form of drama that is undoubtedly of ancient origin, wherein practically all the actors, except those playing female parts, were in distinctive masks. As a rule, women do not play in the Khon, even the female parts being taken by men. The dancing and posturing are both graceful and expressive, grace and expression being very nicely combined. Not only the arms and hands but the whole body has to be used, and it is no exaggeration to say that a great deal of muscular exertion is required to perform the dances and postures in the proper way. The training of a Khon actor is both long and tedious. In the first stage it resembles a very thorough gymanstic training. It takes the best part of a year, sometimes longer, before an actor attains anything like proficiency.

Taking the fact of the strenuousness of the dancing and posturing into consideration, it is obviously impossible for an actor to sing or speak his own lines; besides, even if he were not too tired to do so, the mask he wears would effectually prevent him from being heard clearly. Therefore, his lines are spoken for him by a chorus, the actor suiting his actions to the words. There are also certain occasions when the actor relies upon pantomime to express his words, and such pantomimic action could be as expressive as words when performed by a first-rate actor.

The plays presented by the Khon are always some portions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the whole of which has been done into Siamese.[12]

The music is very important for the form of drama called Khon. It is traditional Thai Music.

Dresses, Ornaments and head-dresses

The important things for the actors who act in the various roles in the drama-form called Khon are dresses, ornaments and head-dresses or masks. Each actor has to dress himself in accordance with his role, human, demoniac, or simian.

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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Details of ornaments and costumes worn by Rāma :

1. KAM-LAI-THAO.	Anklet.
2. SA-NAP-PHLAO.	Tight-fitting drawers.
3. PHA-NUNG.	Nether garment.
4. HOI-KHAMG or CHIA-RA-BAT.	Embroidered cloth used like a belt, but with its ends hanging down to the knees, one at the front of each leg.
5. SUA or CHA-LAWNG-ONG.	Upper Garment.
6. RAT-SA-EW.	Waist-band.
7. HOI-NA.	Cloth hanging down from the waist between the ends of No. 4.
8. SUNWAN-KRA-THOP.	Gold plate, with traceries in open work, hung from the waist so that it partly covers No. 7.
9. KHEM-KHAT.	Belt.
10. KHRONG-SAW or NUAM-KHAW.	Ornament worn around the body on a level with the shoulders.
11. THAP-SUANG.	Pendant.
12. IN-THA-NU.	Epaulette. This is worn only with the upper garment which has long sleeves.
13. PHA-HU-RAT.	Armlet.
14. SANG-WAN.	Golden chain worn from the shoulder to the hip opposite to it.
15. TABATHIP.	Plate attached to No. 14 where the latter touches the hip.
16. CHA-DA.	Crown.
17. DAWK-MAI-PHET.	"Diamond flower."

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18. KAN-CHIAK or CHORN-HU.	Ornamental piece extending down, behind the ear, from the lower part of the crown.
19. DAWK-MAI-THAT.	Flower worn above the right ear.
20. U-BA.	String of flowers hanging down, from the lower part of the crown, in front of the right ear.
21. THAM-MA-RONG.	Finger-ring.
22. WEAN-RAWP.	Bracelet, which is a coil spirng bent into a circle.
23. PA-WA-LAM.	Bracelet of bead.
24. THONG-KORN.	Ornament for the fore-arm which looks like a row of bangles fused together.

Note : Sometimes some of the ornaments are not worn. —Dhanit.

Details of ornaments and costumes worn by Sītā :

1. KAM-LAI-THAO.	Anklet.
2. SUA-NAI-NANG.	Bodice.
3. PHA-NUNG-NANG.	Nether garment.
4. KHEM-KHAT.	Belt or girdle.
5. SA-ING.	Set of chains worn from the
6. PHA-HOM-NANG.	Upper garment.
7. NAUM-NANG.	Ornament worn around the body on a level with the shoulders.
8. CHI-NANG.	Pendant.
9. PHA-HU-RAT.	Armlet.
10. WAEN-RAWP.	Bracelet which is a coil spring bent into a circle.
11. PA-WA-LAM.	Bracelet of beads.
12. KAM-LAI-TA-KHAP.	Bracelet shaped like a centipede.
13. KAM-LAI-SUAM.	Bracelet.

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14. THAM-MA-RONG.	Finger-ring.
15. MONG-KUT.	Crown.
16. KAN-CHIAK or CHORN-HU.	Ornamental piece extending down, behind the ear, from the lower part of the crown.
17. DAWK-MAI-THAT.	Flower worn above the left ear.
18. U-BA or PHAUNG-DAWK-MAI.	String of flowers hanging down, from the lower part of the crown, in front of the left ear.

Note : Sometimes some of the ornaments are not worn. —Dhanit.

Details of ornaments and costumes worn by Hanumān

1. KAM-LAI-THAO.	Anklet.
2. SA-NAP-PHLAO.	Tight-fitting drawers.
3. PHA-NUNG.	Nether garment.
4. HOI-KGANG or CHIA-RA-BAT.	Embroidered cloth used like a belt, but with its ends hanging down to the knees, one at the front of each leg.
5. HANG-LING.	Monkey's tail.
6. PHA-PIT-KON or HOI-KON.	Loin Cloth.
7. SUA.	Upper garment representing the fur of the monkey.
8. RAT-SA-EW	Waist-band.
9. HOI-NA.	Cloth hanging down from the waist between the ends of No. 4.
10. KHEM-KHAT.	Belt.
11. KHRONG-KHAW or NUAM-KHAW.	Ornament worn around the body on a level with the shoulders.
12. THAP-SUANG.	Pendant.
13. SANG-WAN.	Golden chain worn from the shoulder to the hip opposite to it.

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14. TAP-THIP.	Plate attached to No. 13 where the latter touches the hip.
15. PHA-HU-RAT.	Arm-band. Usually fixed on the arm of the upper garment by stitching. The upper garment represents the fur of the monkey.
16. WAEN-RAWP.	Bracelet, which is a coil spring bent into a circle.
17. PA-WA-LAM.	Bracelet of beads.
18. KAM-LAI-PHAENG or THONG-KORN.	Ornament for the forearm which looks like a a row of bangles fused together.
19. HNA-KHON.	Mask.
20. TRI.	Trident.

Note : The important monkey characters in the masked-play dress in the same way and differ from one another by the colour and shape of the masks of which there are about forty kinds. but some characters need not dress like this on every occasion. —Dhanit.

Details of ornaments and costumes worn by Thoskan :

1. KAM-LAI-THAO.	Anklet.
2. SA-NAP-PHLAO.	Tight-fitting drawers.
3. PHA-NUNG.	Nether garment.
4. HOI-KHANG or CHIA-RA-BAT.	Embroidered cloth used like a belt, but with its ends hanging down to the knees, one at the front of each leg.
5. PHA-PIT-KON or HOI, KON.	Loin cloth.
6. SUA or KROH.	Upper garment or armour.
7. RAT-SA-EW.	Waist-band.
8. HOI-NA.	Cloth hanging down from the waist between the ends of No. 4.

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9. KHEM-KHAT.	Belt.
10. RAT-OK.	Chest-band.
11. IN-THA-NU.	Epaulette.
12. KHRONG-SAW or NUAM-KHAW.	Ornament worn around the body on a level with the shoulders.
13. THAP-SUANG.	Pendant.
14. SANG-WAN.	Golden chain worn from the shoulder to the hip opposite to it.
15. TAP-THIP.	Plate attached to No. 14 where the latter touches the hip.
16. WAEN-RAWP.	Bracelet, which is a coil spring bent into a circle.
17. PA-WA-LAM.	Bracelet of beads.
18. SHONG-KORN.	Ornament for the forearm which looks like a row of bangles fused together.
19. PHUANG-PRA-KAM.	Necklace of beads.
20. HUA-KHON.	Mask of Thosakan.
21. THAM-MA-RONG.	Finger-ring.
22. SAWN or KHAN-SAWN.	Bow.

Note : The important demon characters in the masked play dress in the same way and differ from one another only by the colour and shape of the masks of which there are one hundred kinds. But on some occasions the less important characters need not dress like this in every particular. —Dhanit.

Where and when the Khon is performed

The Khon is performed on the ground or the stage.

The various occasions on which the Khon is performed are as follows :

Coronation, ceremonies and festivals, important cremations, marriage, and ordination.

Besides these, it is also performed for the holding of arts and Thai tradition, and sometiems for enjoyment of the kings

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after the battle. Nowadays, the Khon has still been regarded by the Thai government as the Thai drama of great importance. So the *Rāmāyaṇa* story has been considered valuable and important too.

Owing to the fact that the Khon is the important Thai national drama, it has been also performed on the occasion of welcoming the government's guests from foreign countries.[13]

Portions of the plays presented by Khon

The portions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that are always represented in Khon or the masked play are :[14]

Episode of killing Kākanasun, Maiyarab the Magician, a Floating Lady, Nāgapāśa, the weapon of Brahmā (Bromastra), Sītā wading through the fire, Hanumān, the Volunteer, Rāma's journey in the forest and Rāma's ruling over Ayodhyā.

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[13] Dhanit Yupo, op. cit., pp. 113-122.

[14] The Department of Fine Arts, *Bot Khon* (Bangkok, 2507), p. 1.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN LAOS

(Vientiane Version)

By **KAMALA RATNAM**

Few people know that in earliest times the land known today as Laos was called MUONG XIENG THONG or LAEM THONG. Its Sanskrit name was SOUVANNAPHOUM PATHET (Suvarna-bhumi Pradesha) meaning regions rich in gold. Souvannaphoum Pathet was a large peninsula situated between the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. According to Mahashila Viravong, the most reliable contemporary historian of Laos, this region included, 2,500 yeas ago, parts of Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Consequently, the cultural history of these combines is very much mixed and interwoven with each other. Known as Indo-China during colonial times, the political pattern of the peninsula changed after the routing of the French at Dien Bien Phu at the end of the Second World War. Four clearly marked and self-governing independent States emerged, namely: Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. All four States observe Buddhism as their religion, and among them Laos and Thailand are ethnically and culturally closer together. They speak a closely related language, easily understood by both sides, although the written script is different. Customs and manners, food and dress, as well as geography bind the Thai and the Lao people even closer together. The entire landmass comprised by Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and some parts of Malaya has strong cultural ties with India and represents the Indian part of the larger area formerly known as Indo-Chine. Of these Laos may truly be considred, as its name signifies, *the unspoilt golden heart of India.* The smiling and beauty loving people of Laos represent in themselves all that India has wished to be through her saints, artists and religious teachers. The culture of Laos, Thailand and Cambodia is made up of the earliest forms of Hinduism or Vedic Brahmanism and Hīnayāna (Theravada) Buddhism. Consequently, it shows the deep meditative and philosophic aspect of the teachings of the Buddha coupled with the aesthetic imagination and literary aspects of the Hindu mind. This entire region is dotted with

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temples dedicated to Buddha, decorated with figures of Hindu gods and goddesses, united and protected as if within the mother-like embrace of long rows of guilded paintings on the walls depicting the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Apart from their artistic merits as mural paintings and the sanctity and reverence attached to them as objects of temple worship, the frescoes play an important part in the reconstruction of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story as known in this area.

Indian culture began to spread in Indo-China from the 1st century A.D. onwards. During the next five hundred years the *Rāmāyaṇa* had gained enough popularity for its author Vālmīki to be considered an incarnation of Viṣṇu and temples were dedicated to him describing his compassion and creativity. A stone image of Vālmīki and Sanskrit inscription have been found in a temple in Champā (modern Vietnam) belonging to the period of king PRAKASHADHARMA (653–678 A.D.). The inscription reads as follows :

Yasya śokāt samutpannam Ślokam Brahmābhipūjati |
Vishṇoh pumsah purāṇasya mānushasyātmarūpiṇah ||

All of Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia and laos have their own versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story, or the 'Chronicles of Rāma' as versified by sage Vālmīki in *circa* 1000 B.C. The main events and the kernel of the story is the same in all cases, but the elaboration and addition of events, description of flora and fauna, customs and manners and geography are peculiar to each region. Thus the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in Laos although similar to its counterpart in Thailand and Cambodia retains its own individuality and character. As regards composition the *Rāmakīrti* of Cambodia and the *Rāmakien* of Thailand seem to be older than the versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* found in Laos. In Laos the *Rāmāyaṇa* is present in five forms—(1) Dance (2) Song (3) Painting and sculpture (4) Sacred texts to be recited on festive occasions and (5) manuscripts, and enjoy popularity in that order. The *Rāmāyaṇa* as dance-drama enjoys the pride of place, in the Royal Palace at Luang Prabang and the 'Natyasala' dance school at Vientiane. With the dance-drama goes its appropriate music and song. The *Rāmāyaṇa* in painting and sculpture is seen within the temples. In its richest forms it is found in the court-temples of Luang Prabang, a detailed account

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of which has been published as an illustrated article by me in Vol. 3 of "Studies in Indo-Asian Culture."[1] It is also found painted in water colours on the inner walls of VAT POU MOUNG in Vientiane, a detailed survey of which is the scope of this paper. As sacred text the *Rāmāyaṇa* is recited for several months during the rainy season in the temples of Vientiane and other important towns, when people from neighbouring localities come to hear it as part of their religious ritual. As regards *Rāmāyaṇa* Mss., Laos does not present a very encouraging picture. One has to keep in mind the fact that till recently there was no printed edition of the Lao *Rāmāyaṇa*, until the ICCR, Delhi sent an Indian scholar to Vientiane to help in the search and publication of the available Mss. of this. Accordingly, the Lao language text edited by Sachchidananda Sahai was published by the Indian Embassy in Vientiane in 1973. The editor was able to use six Mss. as the basis of his work, one of which originally consisting of 43 Sections was preserved in the musuem of Vat Pra Keo in Vientiane. In 1961, the scholars in Vientiane had informed me that CHAO PHET SARATH, a member of the Lao princely family had got the Ms. of the 'PHA LA PHA LAM' (Lao title of the *Rāmāyaṇa*) copied in the year 1933. The work was completed in sixty volumes, each volume consisting of 20 leaves and whole Ms. was carefully preserved in VAT PRA KEO. However, I was told that during the 1945 Japanese invasion of laos more than half of the PHET SARATH Ms. was found missing. As Vientiane was in the grip of civil war in the years 1960-61, and conditions were very unsettled, it was impossible to make further researches or even a close examination of the Mss. The published text of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is in the Lao language and so far no translation is available. Hence, its detailed and comparative study will have to wait for some time. Meanwhile we turn our attention to the Vientiance frescoes.

It was MAHSILA VIRAVONG who personally guided me through the *Rāmāyaṇa* frescoes preserved in VAT OUP MOUNG and explained them to me. However, before we enter into a description of the frescoes, it is necessary to have a little historical background.

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[1] Published by the International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi-16, 1974.

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Background History

We know that quite sometime before the 1st century B.C. Indian explorers had reached the peninsula of SUVARAN BHŪMI and had established kingdoms there. Chinese records mention a certain Huen Tien, who is no other than KAUṆḌINYA, a Brahmana from India, who married the Queen of FU-NAN and established a Hindu Kingdom there. Says R.C. Majumdar : "The Hindu empire of FU-NAN probably inclued not only Cambodia but also Malaya peninsula and Siam, now called Thailand[2] and that a Hindu Kingdom also existed in Laos. The Hindu empire FU-MAN (modern Vietnam) was responsible for spreading Indian culture in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. It came to and end in the VIth century A.D. as a result of its conquest by a far more powerful State of Kambuja (Cambodia), which rose in the north, also ruled by Hindu Kings. The new kingdom of Kambuja comprised large parts of its neighbouring territory, including the Central, Southern and Eastern provinces of Laos. During the two hundred years of their building the great temples of NOKORN THOM (857 A.D.) and ANGKOR WAT (1057 A.D.), the KHMERS became very powerful and extended their kingdom up to XIENG SEN and XIENG RAI." It was at this time that the Lao started migrating from South-China and in their southward drive, they clashed with the KHMERS.[3] The decline of the Hindu Kingdoms of Suvarnabhūmi occurred about 1285 A.D. when Kublai Khan, the Mongol ruler of China ransacked the peninsula. The people of Cambodia even in modern times are known as Khmer. To quote Mahasila again, "The Khmer race is of an ancient Indian descent. This race has given birth to various ethnic groups known as the Khmer, Mon, Meng, Kha, Khamu and Malay. The Khmer came to settle down in SOUVANNAPHOUM PATHET even before the advent of the Buddha, 2,500 years ago. But the largest migration took place in the reign of Ashoka Raja who ruled Pataribud (Pāṭaliputra) from the year 218 to 228 B.E. (325–316 B.C.). According to Mahasila Emperor Ashoka's war in Kalinga was responsible for thousands of "Indians from the southern part of India to live in Indo-China."

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2 'Indian Culture in South-East Asia', R.C. Majumdar—B.J. Institute of Learning and Research, Ahmedabad, p. 13.

3 Mahasila Viravong—Phong Savadan Lao.

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Such was the mass of people with predominantly Hindu or Brahmanic cluture that confronted the Lao people in their southward march from their original homeland in China. Mahasila claims that the Lao race originated as one amongst the first four that came into being about 100,000 years ago. The ancestors of the Lao race were the Ai-Lao who were settled in the valleys of HWANG HO and YANG TSE rivers in the rear of mailand China. The Ai-Lao were mainly agricultural people The word 'Lao', according to Mahasila, means big or civilized. The Lao were unmistakably related to the Chinese as were the Thais. However, being temperamentally kind-hearted and peace-loving they were obliged to move southward by the aggressive Chinese towards the end of the XIIIth century A.D. This was precisely the period when the Mongol leader Kublai Khan was over-running the Chinese mainland. The pressure of the Chinese compelled the Lao to move southward until they were cribbed in their present little land-stretch of 600 miles which they affectionately called "The Land of the Million Elephants, Kingdom of the White Parasol." For about a century and a half the new home of the Lao was under the control of the Thais who had founded powerful kingdoms of Ayuthya and SUKHOTHAI in Siam (Thailand). The weakening of the Thai States in 1345 A.D. favoured the founding of the Lao State proper.

The founder of the Lao State was FA NGUM, son of an exiled Lao chief, who had taken refuge at the court of Angkor. He married the daughter of the Khmer King and between 1340 and 1350 A.D. took command of an army to reconquer the lost lands of his father in the upper Mekong. Moving upriver and detouring the plateaux of Xieng Khouang, Houaphanh and Sip Song Phanna, he descended on the site of Louang Prabang where he was proclaimed King. Conquering Xieng Mai in the Upper Menam valley, he took control of Vientiane and swept on to the Khorat plateua as far as Roi. Having organised the conquered lands, Fangum went back to Luang Prabang where in 1353 A.D. he was installed as "Sovereign of the Kingdom of Lan Xang (Million Elephants)."

The kingdom of Laos lies north-west to the vast plain of the river Mekong (ME=mother, KONG=GANGA, from where the

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land rises high into plateau and then on to jungle-covered mountains where rivers are invariably the sole means of communication. Even today surface transport is few and far between, roads are non-existent and the railway is not heard of. The only railway station is Nong Khai across the river from the city of Vientiane in Thai territory connecting it with Bangkok. The land and mountain-cribbed geograpy of Laos with no river or sea outlet, is responsible for its secluded and peculiarly beautiful culture. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Lao, like the Balinese, are one of the last people on earth who possess and keep alive the richest and most generous of human qualities cultivated by the inhabitants of this earth. Their isolation has proved a cultural boon to them. Following the Indian way of life and the teachings of the Buddha, which found expression in their art and poetry, the Lao have remained a people of simple customs and habits, deeply marked by a religious awareness synthesised by a feeling of peace and brotherhood with all living beings.

Thus the Indo-Chinese peninsula was the recipient of ancient Indian civilization and culture epitomized by the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* and later it received the Buddhist Theravāda philosophy which came to it via Burma and Ceylon. While Buddhism provided the moral basis and a practical code for daily life, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* became entrenched in the emotional and artistic life of the people. In time the art of temple-building, sculpture, carving on wood and stone, drama, theatre and ballet drew their inspiration from the episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Since artistic expression requires ample material resources and comparative freedom from the cares of daily life, the Royal Courts became the repositories of the *Rāmāyaṇa* culture. The Buddhistic temples with their humanistic approach were catering to the social needs of the community. They provided seminaries, scholars, hospitals and homes for the aged and disabled, they looked after the poor. The corridors of these temples resounded with the reading of the *Rāmāyaṇa* text, while their walls were ornamented with murals describing scenes from the sacred Indian texts. In many temples figures of pre-Buddhistic Hindu gods and goddesses were boldly chiselled or carved on wood or stone. In fact Buddhism and the Brahmanic

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culture existed side by side, often merging one with the other, providing rich spiritual fare for the kindly and simple people of greater India. And in all these countries the fabric of beauty inspired by the *Rāmāyaṇa* provided a splendid canopy for the preservation and protection of the pure moral teachings of the Buddha.

In Laos two versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are known, the Luang Prabang version as found in the Royal Capital and the Vientiane version as found in the province of Vientiane. The Luang Prabang version is found painted on the walls of the VAT PA KE temple. The Vientiane version is supported by Mss. as well as temple-paintings. Under the personal supervision and patronage of the King, who is a scholar of Indian philosophy and literature and knows Sanskrit, and the facilities provided by him at the court, the Luang Prabang *Rāmāyaṇa* has remained nearer to its Thai and Indian sources. The Vientiane version described by Lafont as "PA LAK PA LAM" (Beloved Lakshmana, beloved Rama)[4] though based on the Indian version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is not the translation of any Indian work. On the other hand it is an original recension composed during the first half of the 19th century and reduced to writing much later. None of the six Mss. seen by Sahai seem to be earlier than 1931. After a close examination of the Mss. Sahai concludes that the "Pha Lak Pha Lam" written by a certain Phuttaphochan (Buddhaghoshacharya) existed in Vientiane 1850 A.D. It is noteworthy that the author of "Pha Lak Pha Lam" has taken care not to mention Louang Prabang which was the Royal capital of united Laos until about the end of the seventeenth century. Between 1711 and 1731 A.D. the kingdom of Laos had split in three parts, Louang Prabang, Vientiane and Champassac, each claiming rivalry over the other. The text of the Vientiane "Pha Lak Pha Lam" portrays Rāma as a mighty king of Vientiane, exercising considerable control over neighbouring territories. Rāma is shown as achieving political gains through matrimonial alliances. After their victory over Laṅkā, both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa march back to Vientiane through Thai territory. On their way they establsih many new cities including Ayuthya, Pisanulok and Nakhon Savan. This part of the story bears resemblance to facts of actual history according to which

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4 Ecole Francaise D'Extreme—Orient no. VI, PA LAK PA LAM—P. B. Lafont 1957.

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military expeditions were sent from Laos against Ayuthya and Pisanulok and mariage alliances were made with them. The text also narrates the extent of Rāma's kingdom from Vientiane to Inthapatthankhon, the capital of Khmer kingdom. The sons of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are shown ruling over large parts of North-Eastern Thailand. In fact even today these places situated on the northern banks of the Mekong are claimed as Laotian territory. The above details provide reasonable grounds for the supposition that the author of the Vientiane vesion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was describing post-1731 events when Vientiane had broken away from Louang Prabang and became a separate kingdom. The author Buddhaghoshacharya was pobably a court-poet wishing to extol his king and the new glory of Vientiane. In order to give wide popularity and permanency to his panegyric he wove his legend around the well-known story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. During the brief period of the existence of the Vientiane Kingdom (Circa 1711-1829 A.D.). Chao Anou (1804–1828 A.D.) appears to be the only important ruler who tried hard for the betterment of the lot of his people and strove to protect this independence from continuous Siamese interference. Chao Anou also helped the king of Champassac to quell internal revolts and together the two, Siamese domination. Hence it may tentatively be assumed that the author of the Pha Lak Pha Lam was a contemporary of Chao Anou of Vientiane and his work was known in the Vientiane province before 1850 A.D. In his introduction to the Phra Lak Phra Lam Shahai offers further internal evidence which would support the above theory.

The Characters of the *Lava Rāmāyaṇa* are extremely fresh and novel and except for the bare bones of the plot, they bear little resemblance to their originals in Vālmīki. As a matter of fact they move and behave exactly like Lao men and women and conform strictly to local customs and traditions. The social life, food and dress and the circumstances of general behaviour follow closely the Laotian pattern. Close association with the animal and supernatural world is also maintained as a significant feature of life in Laos. Long passages of love-poetry, reminiscent of the Sanskrit Mahākāvyas are included as part of the narrative. As a matter of fact the Lao *Rāmāyaṇa* is a true encyclopaedia of life in Laos. Since diversified knowledge in other books was not available, the *Pha Lak Pha Lam* became a veritable

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storehouse of Lao life, culture and habits, customs and manners, flora and fauna, geography and the history of its men and animals.

In many respects the Laotian version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is very similar to those popular in Indonesia, Malaya, Thailand and Cambodia, all of which seem to be based on the local versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* prevalent in Bengal and South India. Thus contrary to the strict code of moral discipline of Vālmīki, the characters of the *Lava Rāmāyaṇa* do not show much regard for logic and purity of relationships. They have their own logic which justifies their *ad hoc* or chance relationships and actions. For example, even important characters like Rāma and Hanumān invariably cohabit and have children from women they happen to meet, and the defeated Rāvaṇa offers a boat to his enemy Rāma to travel. In Laotian life enmity and discord are not permanent. They are chance waves to be sumberged eventually in the vast sea of piety and friendship.

Phonetic changes in the names of Rāmāyaṇa Characters

The proper names of the classical *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* have undergone great change owing to the phonetic peculiarities of the Lava language. Thus,

RĀMA	becomes	LAM or LAMMA
SĪTĀ	”	NANG (LADY) SĪDA
LAKṢMAṆA	”	LAK
HANUMĀN	”	HANUMONE or HULLAMAN
SUGRĪVA	”	SUKRIP
RĀVAṆA	”	RAPHANASUANE or PHOMMACHAK
LAṄKĀ	”	LANGKA

and so on.

Difference between the Lava and the classical Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Laos—

(1) Rāma is given a very unimportant subordinate role compared to the hero of Vālmīki. In fact throughout the story he appears to be a stranger.

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(2) The true hero of the story is Rāvaṇa who is not a demon with 10 heads and 20 arms as in Vālmīki, but a clever and well-read young man of great beauty and charm, enjoying the protection of Indra.

(3) Sītā has a comparatively short and unimportant role in the story. She is the daughter of Rāvaṇa and is not totally averse to the charms of king of Laṅkā.

(4) Hanumān is the son of Rāma, who leaves his monkey-skin at the end of the story.

(5) All the characters and personages described behave and carry out their activities in the Lao language and in a manner practised in Laos even today.

Geography of Lava Rāmāyaṇa

Contrary to other known vesrions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which have preserved the original Indian names of places and rivers, etc. (as in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaya and Cambodia), the *Lava Rāmāyaṇa* story had taken place in the land of Laos and in the Mekong valley to the exact. The 'Pha Lak Pha Lam' is in fact a true dictionary of the actual topography of middle Laos. The first 20 "Rhuk" (pages) of the work, have nothing to do with the *Rāmāyaṇa* as such, being a collection of the folk-loric geography of the middle Mekone where later on the characters grow and develop. The Lava believe that the 'Pha Lak Pha Lam' was recited by the Buddha himself to the monks of the Sattavana (Śreṣṭhavana meaning 'excellent forest') pagoda.

Thus in all its forms the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its Laotian incarnation of 'Pha Lak Pha Lam' is a truly national epic enjoying immense popularity.

The Phommachak

The PHOMMACHAK (Sanskrit Brahmachakra) is an adaptation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story of Buddhist monks for their religious purposes. Here the story is treated as a previous life of the Buddha. Rāma is no other than Lord Buddha himself, Rāvaṇa is Devadatta and Sītā is Yaśodharā. Compared to 'Phra Lah Phra Lam', this version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not very popular because having transformed the story, the monks failed

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to provide a parallel iconography, art and theatre for it. In the absence of cultural visual base, the transformed story failed to grip the imagination of the people.[5]

The Rāmāyaṇa Frescos in Vat Oup Muong, Vientiane

There are 29 murals on the walls of the central hall of the Vat Oup Muong, describing the 'Pha Lak Pha Lam' story. Oup Muong means 'underground hall' or 'tunnel'. At the time when I went to see these paintings, the central hall was occupied by Buddhist monks as their place or residence. Their clothes and belongings were scattered all over the place. This caused some apprehension in my mind as political conditions were very unsettled in Laos and Vientiane itself was experiencing the ravages of civil war. I was afraid that any time this temple might become a place for taking refuge or war-shelter and eventually be reduced to the status of living quarters resulting in damage and possible total loss of these precious paintings. Consequently I lost no time in photographing the paintings and recording my impressions of them. Below is given a description of the paintings as seen by me during the month of September, 1961. The age of the paintings is about 25 years. Apparently they were executed by about the same time when the Mss. were copied in 1933-35. The story as revealed by these murals differs considerably from the one described by the Luang Prabang murals. A comparative study of the two versions of the story will be subject of a separate paper. It is to be noted that while describing the paintings, I have tried to keep close to the style of English language used by my guide Mahasila. This is done in order to preserve the freshness and peculiar beautiful flavour of the Lao manner of expression and its impact on the Indian mind.

Fresco No. 1

This depicts a scene of Inthapathanakhon. Chao Virunahak is seated in his palace. The palace looks like a Vat, carved

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[5] According to Sahai the narrator of the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam' also claims it to be Sadok (Jātaka), a Budhist birth story, exploiting every opportunity to propound Buddhist doctrine. Rāma, the Bodhisattva, is found preaching the law even to elephants and oxen. However, this aspect of the story has not culturally influenced the Lao people.

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temple roofs and carved pillars are clearly seen. Virunahak's elder brother Thattarah, King of Vārāṇasī, is seated nearby conversing with his wife. Below is the scene of the market-place. Virnuahak is childless, he therefore asks his wife to make Patthana (Prārthanā) in order to get a baby.

Fresco No. 2

As a result of the Patthana a child is born to Virunahak. The mural shows Loum Lou, the baby Rāvaṇa. His body is deformed, he has no arms and no legs. He is born in a rural area into a farmer's family. The scene shows the water-buffalo (the main agricultural animal of the Laotians), the field and the plough. All looks very peaceful. Loum Lou is actually the imperfect incarnation of Maha Phom (Mahā Brahmā). As Mahā Phom, he was very conceited, he thought that he was perfect and refused the advice of the Devas to have his body moulded like theirs before being born on earth. He wanted to come to earth as he was himself, hence he came in the malformed body. In the picture Loum Lou is surrounded by typical Lao village scenery.

Fresco No. 3

Pha In (Deva Indra) comes down from heaven on a white horse and asks the farmer working his field to give him this malformed body. Two blackbirds resembling crows are shown inside the field. This baby is going tobe born as Rāvaṇa and the crows represent evil.

Fresco No. 4

Shows the Palace of Indra in Heaven. It is a very beautiful palace similar in architecture to the Royal Palace in Laos. His horse is tied outside, Indra along with other Devas is remoulding the baby.

Fresco No. 5

Again the palace of Indra, Pha In. Loum Lou looks at his new mold which is as fine as the handsome form of Pha In himself. Infatuated with himself, Loum Lou goes to make love to Indra's wife Nang Susada. Susada did not know that this was

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the wrong man until the morning because Indra, her real husband comes to her only once a night. But this time he came a second time. So by this she realized that the first man was the wrong man and unwillingly, she had been made guilty of adultery. Accordingly she asked Pha In, her husband, to allow her to come down to earth and be punished. This gesture on the part of Indra's wife is typical of the Laotian morality and strength of character. It is the ability and willingness to suffer for one's own mistakes.

Fresco No. 6

Indra and his wife are sitting in the garden of their palace. They are followed by their servants. The seating arangement is very artistic like two out-stretched wings with Indra and Susada at the base or each wing. Susada asks for permission to go down to earth. In front of them is a beautiful canal filled with blue water and flowers. Indra is sitting on a raised lotus seat.

Fresco No. 7

The scene is Laṅkā. Loum Lou is born as Haphana Suan (Haphana=Rāvaṇa=Suan=Asura), the powerful demon. Indra's wife has been born as Nang Sīda (Sītā), Rāvaṇa's daughter. The picture shows Nang Sīda coming down from one corner into the family of Haphana Suan, when she was born as Haphana's daughter; the astrologer came and said that she is not a good girl and she will make trouble for him. So the father was angry. And one day when as a little girl, she was with her father, she pointed a knife at him and cut a part of her father's body. The astrologer was called again and asked to explain this event. And he said again the girl was no good. In the mural, Rāvaṇa is speaking to his wife Nang Montho or Manho.

(There is another story of the birth of Montho. The muni took a frog and by his magic words made a beautiful woman out of it).

Fresco No. 7 shows Rāvaṇa sitting on the boundary wall of his palace-garden. He is carrying his daughter Śītā in his arms and is throwing her very far away in the lake inside the Himalayan forests. (Here my guide told me that Loum Lou after spoiling Deva Indra's wife went down to earth and was born as

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the powerful Rāvaṇa. When Indra's wife is born as his daughter, he does not remember her).

Fresco No. 8

Nang Sīda was thrown in the forest. By chance she fell inside a lake. A (Ṛṣi) by name Chhanaka (Janaka) came to the lake to collect flowers and he saw Sīda. He looks her inside his small hut, where he reached her to her youth. When Sīda was ready to be married the Ṛṣi announced that anyone who wishes to marry my daughter, must pick up a very heavy bow and the one who picks it up would marry her. The picture shows the Ṛṣi's house, he is talking with the young girl Sīda.

Fresco No. 9

Nang Sīda has a separate small house built on one support. The house on one support was built according to an old story of a King who had a very beautiful daughter and he did not want her to be molested. So he built a house on top of a very high single support. This story may not be true but it is part of a tradition in Lao literature.

Fresco No. 10

The Scene is Vārāṇasī Nakhon (Vārāṇasī Nagar). Vārāṇasī was governed by Rāma. Pha Lak and Pha Lam are sitting in this picture asking permission from their father to go and pick up the bow. The father is Thattarath. There were only two brothers, of whom Pha Lam was older. The next picture shows the two brothers travelling on a horse. Both are sitting on the same horse. Pha Lak and Pha Lam are united in one personality.

Fresco No. 11

A new episode begins here. There was a Ṛṣi named Gotama, who had a big beard inside which two small Nouk Chok (Sparrows) had made their nest. One day the bird-couple was quarrelling amongst themselves. "Why did you go out last night to have another girl?' said the wife. And the husband replied that 'No, it was not true.' 'If everything were wrong and not right, and if I were like what you said I was, then I should be heavily wrong like our hospitable Ṛṣi!' When the Ṛṣi heard

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this conversation, he asked the birds, "why should I be wrong as you have said I am?" Then the husband bird said, "Because the Ṛṣi has no children he should be wrong some way." When the Ṛṣi heard this he was not angry, on the contrary he was more or less happy to change his attitude by seeking a way as to how to get a wife. And finally he got the idea that he himself can make a wife. He rubbed his skin and with the dirt thus collected he made a wife for himself with his magic skill. The name of this wife was Nang Kyasi. In Sanskrit this could also be Kāya Śrī=Beauty created from the body. One day when the Ṛṣi was absent from his house Phra Athit (Āditya=Sūrya) came down and saw this beauriful woman and he made love to her. Finally, she got a son Luksai by name Sukrīp (Sugrīva). According to Lao literature Sukrīp is not a monkey.

Once again the same thing happened to Kaysi, and this time Pha Chan (Chandra=Moon) made love to her and the second son Phali Chan (also not a monkey) was born. Apart from these two boys, there was still another child, the first-born daughter by name Phong Si (dear beauty). She was the daughter of the Ṛṣi, she was his real daughter. During the absence of her father, she had noticed that the two men Pha Athit and Pha Chan came to her mother.

This mural (No. 11) shows the Ṛṣi making his wife from the dirt of his body. There is a carved silver bowl in front of him with flowers, candles etc., articles of a typical Laotian religious ceremony. The Ṛṣi had not noticed that the two other children were not his own until they were grown up. When all the children grew up the Ṛṣi paid much attention to the two sons and the daughter was angry with this attitude. Finally, one day she could not resist telling her father that the two boys were not the real family. The father could not believe it. So one day he became sad and angry (this is a typically Lao expression as it is difficult for the kindly Lao people to become angry), yet he wanted to see the truth. So he meditated and prayed to God that he will throw all the three children in the river (shown in the picture along with crabs and fishes) and said that if they are not my children they should die in the river. But if they are his then God should help them to return to him alive.

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In the picture the Ṛṣi *āśrama* is surrounded by trees and birds. The two brothers did not survive the water-ordeal, only the girl came back. There is plenty of natural detail in the paintings.

Fresco No. 12

The two boys swam out of the river and went to a city named Kukkutavadi. They could not go back to their mother. By chance the governor of Kukkutavadi was dead, so they invited the older brother to become the governor. This mural shows the death-scene of the governor. His body is placed inside an urn. Four soldiers are shown standing on the right side. Their dress below the waist is draped like the Indian 'dhoti'—known in the Thai-Lao language as 'Sampot'. The soldiers have Indian head-dress. They are being preceded by their commander who is requesting the boys coming out of the river to become their governor.

Fresco No. 13

(This mural is an inset). It shows a group of buffaloes. The chief of the herd is very strong. His name is Thoropha (Dundubhi). He kills all his male offspring leaving the female alone to live. One day the mother buffalo gave birth to a male calf. She had gone inside a cave to give birth. Thus she saved her male child and named him Thorophi. Thorophi became strong enough to struggle with his father. He fought him and killed him. Thorophi became very powerful and he ruled all the buffaloes. One day he went to the rice fields belonging to the neighbouring city of Kukkutavadi and ate up all the rice and destroyed the fields. This he did very often. When the people of the city saw this they went to the chief of the city and reported the matter to the two brothers. Learning this, the brothers decided to kill the animal.

The mural shows the fight between father and son, Thoropha and Thorophi. A smalleer buffalo is shown on the side, he is Thorophi taking exercise before fighting his father. Later on two bigger buffaloes are shown their horns locked in struggle.The main part of the painting shows a beautifully shaped bufallo Thorophi fighting Sukrip. Sukrip and Thorophi were fighting outside but there was not enough room, so they went inside the cave. The inside of the cave is beautifully sown with brilliant white background. Sukrip has a big sword in one

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hand and he is holding a noose in his left hand. Sukrip told his brother Phali Chan to wait outside the cave and see. If thick blood comes out then the buffalo is killed; but if light blood comes out, then that is his blood and in that case he should close the mouth of the cave with a big stone, so that the buffalo may not come out.

The buffalo was killed and the blood flowed out, but unfortunately it had rained and the blood became clearer than usual. The younger brother thought that Sukrip was killed and he closed the mouth of the cave and went back to the city and proclaimed that his brother was killed and he will be the governor-king and husband of his wife. Sukrip in the meanwhile tried to open the cave but he could not. So he thought that as the buffalo is a very strong animal, he would cut off his head and with the head he would push the stone and by this method he thought he could come out. When he came home and asked his younger brother, "Why did you do that?" Phali Chan replied, "Well, I thought I saw your blood." So Sukrip wanted to kill him. The younger brother not wanting any trouble, ran away and when he was very tired he stopped in one place and started caying and crying till his tears became a river.

Inside an individual mural on the opposite wall, below the main line of frescoes, Phali Chan is shown kneeling on the ground and the river of tears flowing out. There are tall tress by the riverside. On the other side of the river side are Pha Lak and Pha Lam. Pha Lak is standing and talking to Phali Chan and Pha Lam is sitting beside a tree behind which their horse, fully saddled, is grazing.

(As this is an important mural, I will explain its exact location. We begain looking at the murals beginning from the right side wall as one enters the temple. As we face the clay image of Buddha, the right side wall has three windows and one door. The Thorophi fresco is the last one on the left side wall).

My guide now provides the next link to the story. After Haphana Suan made love to Pha In's (Indra's) wife, then he was born in the house of Chao Virunahak of Inthapathanakhon in order to be punished.

We also notice that the wall on top of the main entrance facing the Buddha image has the continuation of the 10th fresco

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of Vāranasi Nakhon governed by Pha Lam's father Thattarath. The two princes Pha Lak and Pha Lam are shown seated in the picture asking permission from their father to go and pick up the bow of Chchanaka.

Fresco No. 14

Pha Lak and Pha Lam after taking permission from their father rode on their horse (both brothers are riding on one horse, this is to show their inseparable nature) and came to a Manikoth (Manigrodh) tree which was full of fruit. Then Pha Lam climbed the tree and went to the wrong branch and ate the wrong fruit and became a monkey. The picture shows a beaufitul tree with many monkeys on it. As a monkey Pha Lam could not come down to be with his brother. As there were two parts of the tree, one part made monkeys and the other part brought them back to human form. This was told to Pha Lak by a Theva (Deva). So he tried to attract Pha Lam to come to the other side of the tree. This went on for about a month. In the meantime Pha Lam as a monkey, had a monkey wife. Now as shown in Fresco No. 11 when the Ṛṣi's daughter Phone Si came back from the water-ordeal, her mother was very angry with her after knowing that he had told her father about her two loves. So with her magic she turned her into a monkey. Now the monkey Phong Si came to live on this tree and became Pha Lam's wife.

After some time Pha Lam came to the other side of the tree and became a man and left the place. Some time after this Hanumone was born from the womb of Phong Si.

Fresco No. 15

After the above incident Pha Lak and Pha Lam come to the Asom (Āśrama) of Chchanaka and Pha Lam is able to lift the bow and marry Nang Sīda. Chchanaka is shown in yellow robes sitting in his Āśrama. Rāvaṇa has also come to attend the wedding. The mural shows Rāvaṇa very ugly. He loves the girl Sīda but he cannot lift the bow. Sīda is shown sitting high inside her house built on the single support. Pha Lam is with her, his horse is standing nearby.

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Fresco No. 16

Pha Lak is driving a one-horse charitot with red wheels and golden spokes. (One pauses to wonder whether such chariots and such horses ever existed in Laos. At the moment they are nowhere to be seen). Pha Lam and Nang Sīda are sitting inside the chariot. At this point Rāvaṇa sends a golden deer to cheat them. Sīda is attracted by deer and she wants to have it.

Pha Lam goes on the horse to get the deer. After going some distance Pha Lam tried to shoot the deer, but when he went near it, there was nothing. This was bceause Rāvaṇa himself had taken the form of the deer. In his turn Rāvaṇa shouted in Pha Lam's voice asking for help. Pha Lak heard the voice, but he did not wish to go, sensing danger of Sīda. But Nang Sīda insisted and at last he could not resist and went to help his brother. At that time Haphana Suan came and abducted Sīda.

Fresco No. 17

(Right hand wall next to entrance facing the grand image of the Buddha). This mural shows Haphana Suan taking away Nang Sīda, and the big bird Saṭāyu is trying to prevent him. Saṭāyu is the friend of Pha Lam's father Tattarath. There is tremendous artistic balance in this painting. The figure of Saṭāyu is grandiose, compared to him Haphana Suan is shown very small and puny. His physical size here symbolizes his moral stature. Haphana Suan removes the ring from Sīda's finger. It is a magic ring which is reputed to kill Saṭāyu. He throws the ring at the bird. The bird is killed, not immediately but later. In the picture Saṭāyu has the face of a bird with a crown and human arms from which wings are growing. A very bright sun is shining. Rāvaṇa is shown very large and fierce as he is seen finally robbing Sīda. This is how he appears to her at the time of abduction when Saṭāyu is dying and she is helpless.

The two brothers when they realized that the deer was magic deer, they came back to the place where they had left Sīda. And they found that she was not there. When they knew that Haphana Suan had stolen Sīda, they tried to follow them. Saṭāyu told the brothers that Haphana Suan had stolen Sīda.

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Fresco No. 18

(This is a small one). While following Rāvaṇa, in search of Sīda, the two brothers came to the place where Phali Chan was weeping. The two brothers were so tired that they went out to look for water. They came to a river and tasted the water. But it was salty, so they wanted to know where the water came from. And at last they found Phali Chan from whose eyes the tears had flown into a river.

Pha Lak heard the story of Phali Chan and then took him to his older brother and then Phali Chan asked Pha Lam to help him to go back to his kingdom. He asks him to fight his brother Sukrip.

Fescro No. 19

When they arrived at the city of Sukrip Kukkutavadi, (in Thai language this place is called Khitkhin—Sanskrit Kiṣkindhā), they asked Phali Chan to invite Sukrip to come out and fight with him. The Fresco shows the two brothers Sukrip and Phali Chan fighting with swords in the air. Then at an opportune moment Pha Lam shoots him with his arrow in the left foot. He dies. Sukrip is shown falling down from the air, with Pha Lam's arrow in his foot. On the right side there is a big tree with Pha Lam standing beside the horse. The left side shows eight soldiers with bannered spears and swords. According to the Laotians, these soldiers are men. On the left side there is a tree with a Kahok (squirrel) on it.

Fresco No. 20

After the death of his brother Phali Chan became the king of his city. Pha Lak and Pha Lam went on and on and by chance they arrived at the same tree Manikoth where Pha Lam had eaten the fruit and had become a monkey for a while. Not knowing that this was the same tree, they rested under its shade. A monkey on top of the tree by name Hanumone (in reality Pha Lam's son, but so far not known to each other) took the stone of a fruit and hit the two brothers. He hit Pha Lak playfully who woke up and tried to chase Hanumone away. But Hanumone did not go away on the other hand he came down and tried to take Pha Lak's bow. By now they were surprised to

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see the monkey's courage and strength and they tried to ask each other and then they knew that Hanumone is Pha Lam's son. Hanumone was told the story of his birth by his mother.

Now Pha Lam tells Hanumone that he is going to get his first legal wife. (Hanumone's mother was not a legal wife.)[6]

Returning to the figures shown in the Fresco, the two brothers are seen resting on two pillows. Their horse is standing nearby. Hanumone has offered to go and find Nang Sīda; he is very strong and powerful, so he wanted a base from which he could take a leap in the air. If he does it from earth, then it will sink with his force, if he does it from a tree, then the tree will break. So the father Pha Lam said, "Well, you can jump from my knee!" This Fresco shows Pha Lam sitting on the ground and Hanumone getting ready to take off from his knee. Pha Lak stands behind the trees. Lizards are shown climbing the trees.

Now it so happened that Hanumone proved to be too powerful, and in his leap he overstepped the city of Langkā and reached the Assom (Āśrama) of the Ṛṣi. At the end of the Fresco Hanumone is shown flying over a tree.

Fresco No. 21

The name of the Ṛṣi here is Nārada. This Ṛṣi does not open his eye; because if he opens his eyes, then everything he sees will burn up. So when he heard the sound that someone had come, he opened his eyes. And Hanumone who had come there to ask the way to Langkā was burnt up. The Ṛṣi tried to look for his bowl of magic water to throw on the ashes so that he may know what was burnt. Then it was that Hanumone came

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Note : Apparently the names of the two brothers sukrip and Phali Chan have been reversed in the Lava Rāmāyaṇa. the Vālmīkian names are Bāli and Sugrīva, Bāli, being the elder brother killed by Rāma.

[6] At this point Mahasila, my guide, was closely questioned by me. According to books read by Mahasila, Pha Lam and sixteen wives, Sīda being the first. Mahasila feels that this does not sound to be true, and that this might be a modern interpolation. He further thinks that the Rāmāyaṇa story was very much changed and adapted to local conditions in order to be practical, so that local readers may understand it easily. He says that the original story was taken from India

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to life and the Ṛṣi told him that he had come farther than he should have and he has to go back.[7] Continuing with our story, that night Hanumone asked the Ṛṣi to let him stay there. When darkness came, he asked for a blanket, and the Ṛṣi gave him a handkerchief. Hanumone asked, "Why this handkerchief? I am big, I need a big blanket." So he began stretching his body, bigger and bigger and the handkerchief began to spread with him. When the Ṛṣi saw how powerful Hanumone was, he feared that he might pass over Langkā once again. So he wanted to make him a little tired and he threw his cane in his toilet water. Next morning when Hanumone was washing his face, the cane became a leech and stuck on to his forehead. So every time Hanumone wanted to fly away the leech held him back to the basin like an elastic band. The fresco shows the basin and Hanumone hovering on top attached by the stretched leech. Nearby there is a well, with a hooked rope for drawing water. Another part of the mural shows the Ṛṣi flying on top of the tree getting fruits—apparently for Hanumone's breakfast! This fresco is full of Laotian sense of humour, their love for the extraordinary and bizarre coupled with their sound common sense and logic.

Finally the Ṛṣi told Hanumone, "You can go now", and he went to Langkā where he saw Nang Sīda. She was in the garden. Because at that time Haphana Suan could not leave her inside the house; he was afraid that his wife will see Nang Sīda. Hanumone explained to Nang Sīda that he wanted her back with him to meet his father. But there was one thing which Sīda could not accept and that was for somebody else to touch her body. So she told Hanumone to go back alone and explain to his father that if he wants to take her back, he will have to come and fight with Haphana Suan.

Nang Sīda did not become Haphana's wife. Haphana tried to get near her, but he could not approach her as her body was hot like fire. And Hanumone agreed to go back and explain the situation to Pha Lam. But before going back he destroyed the

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7 Sahai has this to say about the incident : "One of the most interesting episodes of this journey is their meeting with a sage named Chao Risi Ta Fai, who reduces them to ashes and then restores them to life again". Introduction to the 'Phra Lak Phra Lam', p. XXII.

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garden of Laṅgkā. (The story of Sīda's body being to hot is a pointer towards her *Tejas* i.e., her character and chastity).

Fresco No. 22

This is a small mural where Hanumone is shown burning Laṅgkā. When Hanumone was busy destroying the garden, a soldier on guard happened to see a little monkey breaking the baranches of the trees and he reported the matter to Haphana Suan who ordered the monkey to be immediately brough before him. Hanumone, though very strong, allowed himself to be captured. Rāvaṇa ordered the guards to kill him. They tried hard but could not. Then Hanumone suggested that wrap his whole body in cloth, wet it in oil and then set fire to it. They did accordingly, and in this manner Hanumone was able to burn the whole of Laṅgkā with his burning body. The small-sized painting shows Laṅgkā burning and Hanumone perched happily on top of the golden steeple. Masses of flames are shown in superimposed red colour.

Fresco No. 23

Shows the army of Phali Chan going to help Pha Lam. A big army is shown with horses and soldiers with faces resembling monkeys, but they have human bodies. Phali Chan is riding alone on his chariot drawn by two horses. The driver of Phali Chan is riding separate on another horse. His soldiers are armed with spears and swords.

Pha Lak and Pha Lam are in another chariot also drawn by two horses. Their driver is on a separate horse. Between these two chariots there is an army of monkeys. These monkeys are the soldiers of Pha Lak and Pha Lam. Phali Chan has dark blue flag, Pha Lam has an yellow flag with the inscription "Pha Lak Pha Lam's army" on it. In front of Pha Lam's chariot there are more monkeys. Leading them all is the chariot of Hanumone with an orange flag bearing his name on it. It is interesting to note that monkeys are also riding horses. Hanumone's chariot is also drawn by two horses, while his driver rides separately. Hanumone holds a trident in his hand.

This Fresco with the armies of Pha Lam and Phali Chan poised for battle is huge and grand in conception. It occupies

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the whole of the central wall behind the main image of the Buddha. There is a huge seated Buddha in the temple. It appears the artist wanted the scene of Rāma's armies in battle array to be the backdrop for the image of his Lord Buddha. The serene countenance of the master, its compassionate glance and elusive smile provide a fitting contrast to the warlike preparations behind.

As the armeis were getting ready, a Yaksinī (Yakṣiṇī) Nang Phi Sia Samud comes on the scene. She is shown at the end of this Fresco. She has a huge blue body, with large protruding breasts which are falling down. She is a friend of Haphana Suan and has come to oppose the army of Pha Lam. Hanumone (also known as Hullaman) is shown flying above the Yakṣiṇī with his Triśūl (trident) raised.

Fresco No. 24

The next small Fresco shows that the Yakṣiṇī is dead. After this Haphana Suan sent his first Commander-in-Chief Phanya Sinuha for the purpose of protecting Langkā. The small mural shows Phanya Sinuha's tongue which is so enlarged as to cover the whole of Laṅgkā. Hullaman is shown piercing this gongue with his trident. Sinuha is dead. The tongue is shown in a dirtly ochre colour.

Fresco No. 25

This is a large painting showing Haphana Suan throwing out Bibhek (Vibhīṣaṇa) from his palace. On the other side near a grey lake, filled with beautiful lotus flowers are shown Pha Lak, Pha Lam and Hullaman. And they receive Bibhek. Pha Lam is dressed in flowing robes, which at the legs, look like wings, but they are not wings. Pha Lam is shown tall and handsome with Indian features. Especially noticeable are the large liquid eyes full of compassion like lotus-petals floating on the surface of a lake. Pha Lam is equally handsome, with well defined features and sharp Indian nose. Hanumone is holding Bibhek, welcoming him. Haphana Suan was assited by his councillors, six of them in expelling Bibhek. His palace has a splendid curved roof, like the top of a Laotian temple. Bibhek was thrown out because he advised Haphana Suan to return Nang Sīda. In the Laotian *Rāmāyaṇa* Bibhek is the son of Rāvaṇa. In Thailand he is the

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younger brother, which is according to Vālmīki. In the mural Bibhek is shown like a small child with unpainted body. Only an outline marks his body. This is the artist's attempt to portray the denuding of Bibhek's personality an self-respect by Haphana Suan. Bibhek is the symbol of the spiritual havoc suffered by those who come in contact with the overbearing guilt and conceit of Haphana Suan and his stubbornness leading to self-destruction. The artist has affectionately surrounded Bibhek's denuded body with luxuriant hills and forests all round.

Fresco No. 26

Shows the army of Haphana Suan ready to fight Pha Lak and Pha Lam's army. His soldiers are fierce-looking men in blue tunics and yellow-edged red half-pants. They are bare-footed carrying huge maces, tridents and red flags. Haphana Suan is riding on his chariot drawn by two horses. His driver is riding separately. There is thick forest all around. Some soldiers are riding on horseback. Haphana Suan's chariot is well decorated with a beautiful red silk umbrella, the sign of kingship. Some of his soldiers are in yellow-bordered brown shirts and red pants. They are riding red horses.

Fresco No. 27

This is an ambitious fresco showing the actual fighting between the two armies. The fighting pairs are shown as under :

Phali Chan fights Kumbhakan. Their arms are dagger and bow. Thali Chan has the bow.

Hullaman fights another general (name not identified). They fight with mace and trident. Hanuman wields the mace according to the Indian traditions.[8]

Pha Lak fights another general unidentified, but most probably Intajit (or Meghand, son of Rāvaṇa). Both of them fight with bows (Khansom in Lao).

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[8] In the Indian tradition Hanumān and Bhīma the Pāṇḍava brother, both are sons of Vāyu. Both carry the Gadā or mace. In the Wayang tradition of Indonesia Hanumān and Bhīma are identified by their dress. Their lower garment has a black and white checked design, very much like that of a chess-board.

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Below monkeys and Haphana's men are shown locked in combat. Their movements are not very fierce. They are gentle, flowing movements like those in a Laotian ballet. The monkey's movements are very graceful and interesting. One monkey turns round and examines his tail. The fighting is going on in Langkā. Hullaman built a bridge of stone across the sea. For the armies of Pha Lak Pha Lam to cross over.

Fresco No. 28

This is a small mural. It shows Hanumone bringing with both his arms a huge rock containing medicine. When Hanumone went to look for the medicine, the medicine was down, when he went down, the medicine went up. Hence he was obliged to bring the whole rock. He has brought the medicine for Pha Lak who was wounded. Hanumone's character and activities show Loatian sense of humour and well-being.

Fresco No. 29

Haphana Suan is killed by Pha Lam. And Pha Lam is shown returning to his capital with Nang Sīda. The mural shows Pha Lam going to Vārāṇasī in one chariot which is drawn by two horses. Pha Lam's chariot has a red and grey flag; he is driving the chariot himself, followed by Pha Lak on horseback, followed by Phali Chan also on horseback. Last of all comes Hullaman in a chariot. Below are soldiers and monkey-armies. They are amusing themselves. This is a typically Laotian end to the episode.

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THE KHVAY THUARAPHI

By **SACHCHIDANAND SAHAI**

In addition to the Vālmīkian version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*-story, many non-Vālmīkian versions travelled to South-East Asia with the Indians of different origins and areas, who visited the region or settled there from time to time. The researches on the Rāma saga in South-East Asia have revealed the existence of a surprising number of versions in this region.[1]

A comparative study of the Indian and the South-East Asian versions will enable us to determine the probable routes and approximate dates of the spread of different versions, and to reconstitute many forgotten historical links between the two areas. Such a comparative study will also throw light on the process of adaptation of this theme to different cultures of South-East Asia and its ultimae transformation as an integral part of these cultures.

Palm Leaf Manuscript of the Text

Though considerably smaller than the *Phra Lak Phra Lam*[2], the text of the *Khavy Thuaraphi*[3] to be analysed in this article offers new data for comparative study, and constitutes an independent version of the story. The original manuscript of the text, preserved in the Royal Palace, Luang Prabang, consists of two sections (*phuk*). It is written in the Yuan script and dialect, prevalent in the region of Xieng-Mai and northern Laos.

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1 For a detailed bibliography of these versions, see S. Singaravelu, "A Comparative Study of the Sanskrit, Tamil, Thai and Malay versions of the Story of Rāma", *The Journal of the Siam Society*, Bangkok, LVI (2), July 1968, p. 139, n. 5.

2 The Laotian text of the work has been edited for the first time by the author of this article. The edition has been prepared after collating six parallel manuscripts of the text : Sachchidanand Sahai, *The Phra Lak Phra Lam or the Phra Lam Sadok*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, 1973. part I, XCIV 484 pages; part II, 422 pages.

3 I visited the Royal palace, Luang Prabang in September, 1972. In the course of an audience graciously granted to me. His Majesty Sri Savang Vatthana, the king of Laos kindly drew my attention to the manuscript of this text. With His Majesty's kind permission a copy of this MS. was offered to me.

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The Royal Palace manuscript is the only copy so far known of the *Khvay Thuaraphi*. It bears several lacunae, and is copied in a confused and careless way. Nevertheless, the story is quite clear in its general outline.

The masuscript does not bear any date. However, the popular interpretation of names of some characters suggests that the Rāma-legend as presented in this manuscript should have been prevalent in the region of Xieng-Mai and northern Laos for many centuries before it was finally recorded in its present written form. According to the present version a child abandoned by Raphanasuan (Rāvaṇa) was given the name of Sītā because the sage Kassapa; after opening the golden casket in which she was concealed, found her rubbing (*si*) her eyes (*ta*) with her raised hands.[4] Another example is the name of Ongkhot. He was named Ongkhot, as the text explains, because he was born with his limbs (*ong*) curved (*khot*), after his mother was wounded by the buffalo, Thuaraphi.[5]

Title of the Text

The story of the buffalo Thuaraphi corresponds to the episode of Dundhubhi in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki.[6] In Vālmīki as well as in the present version, this episode occupies a very small portion of the story. However, this example of narrating the Rāma-legend under the title, *Khvay Thuaraphi* points to the great popularity enjoyed by the episode in some parts of Laos and Thailand. In Luang Prabang, a monk related to me a popular legend according to which the bones of the buffalo Thuaraphi are supposed to be lying in the vicinity of Muong Kasi in northern Laos. The mountain Khao Khvay (horn of the buffalo) near Vientiane is also believed to be named after buffalo Thuaraphi.[7]

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4 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, p. 12. part I).

5 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, p. 58, part I).

6 *The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* (Critically edited for the first time by G.H. Bhatt etc., Oriental Institue, Baroda, 1965), IV. II. 8-22.

7 In the *Phra Lak Phra Lam* (Part II, pp. 199-266), the story of the buffalo is narrated at great length. The Malay version of the story called *Hikayat Seri Rāma* also describes this episode. A. Zieseniss, *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia,* Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., Singapore, 1963, p. 51. For the Thai version of the episode see *The Rāmakien* (translation) by Ray A. Olsson, Praepittaya Co. Ltd., Bangkok, 1968, pp. 54, 86-88.

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Outline of the Story

After an invocaton to the Buddhist trinity—Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—the narrator takes his audience back to the first aeon (*kalpa*) when a king named Tapparamensuan ruled the kingdom of Kāśī. The king had three sons born at the same time to his three queens. In order to avoid internecine strife in future, while the king ordered his eldest son Thattarattha (Daśaratha) to share the burden of the kingdom of Kāśī with him, he asked his second son Virunlaha (Virulha) to rule the far off kingdom of Laṅkā, and the youngest son Viruppakkha (Virūpakkha), the kingdom of Kururathanakhon.

Thattaratha, who ascended the throne of Kāśī after the death of his father, had two sons and one duaghter—the eldest son was Phāri (Bāli) and the youngest Sukhīp (Sugrīva). The daughter was called Nang Kāśī. Together they ruled in the place of their father. Virunlaha, the king of Laṅkā had three sons : the first was named Raphanasuan (Rāvaṇāsura), the second Phik Phi (Vibhīṣaṇa) and the third Inthasik (Indrajit). Raphanasuan possessed two types of supernatural powers—athivitthiyana(?) and the power of the divine vision. Phik Phi was expert in astrology. After the death of their father the three princes ruled together in the kingdom of Laṅkā. Viruppakkha, the king of Kururathanakhon had two sons—Rāma and Lakkhana.[8]

Birth of Nang Sīdā

Raphanasuan assumed the form of Indra with his divine powers and seduced the four billion and five million heavenly maids-in-waiting including Nang Sujātā, the chief queen of Indra. In order to take revenge upon Raphanasuan Nang Sujātā descended from Heaven and reincarnated herself on the lap of Raphanasuan. On the advice of the astrologers, who predicted that the child will cause his death, Raphanasuan cast her adrift after having shut her up in a golden casket placed on a raft. Blown by the wind, the raft arrived at the shores of Jambūdvīpa. A sage named Kassapa found the little princess and adopted her.[9]

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[8] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 1-7, part I).

[9] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 8-13, part I).

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Marriage of Nang Sīdā

While wandering in search of games, hunters arrived at the hermitage of the sage and saw Nang Sīdā. When they returned, they reported the beauty of Sīdā to their respective kings. Thus the news spread all over Jambūdvīpa.

Hundred and one kings of Jambūdvīpa arrived with their four-fold army at the dwelling of the sage; and each of them demanded the hand of Nang Sīdā. The sage laid down the condition that Nang Sīdā would be given to one who was able to lift his bow sahassathamathanu, which could be lifted by as many as one thousand men.[10] Each of the kings wishing to win Nang Sīdā's hand, turned and saw that the bow was very small. Then after paying their respects to the sage, they went and grasped the bow, but none of them could draw it. So placing the bow before the hermit, they hurried off to their own encampments. Thinking that, if they retuned beforehand, those remaining would gain Nang Sīdā, each of them remained there for months and years until Rāma and Lakkhana arrived there.

After completing their study at the dwelling of the preceptor Thisapamokkha, Rāma and Lakkhana set on their journey back home. They arrived in the vicinity of Kassapa's hermitage where the troops of hundred and one kings were making great noise. On the request of his elder brother, Lakkhana first went alone to the hermitage, inquired about the matter and examined the bow. Then both of them went to the hermitage. While they were on their way to the hermitage, Nang Sīdā saw them from the

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[10] The following story is given about the bow : The sage Kassapa belonged to the lineage of the king of Vārāṇasī. The son of a neighbouring king was his great friend. Together they acquired learning in the city of Takkasilā and became well-versed in the three Vedas. On returning home they perceived darkness and suffering in the cycle of rebirth. So they became ascetics in the forest..... living in the same hermitage. (Later the sage Kassapa) spoke to his fellow ascetic, "Being ascetics, it is not proper for us to be together in the same place. You must go and live on the mountain which is in front. As for me, I will remain here. When the night is moonless and when there is full moon, we must change places." Thereupon the other ascetic went to live on the mountain. Before too long he died and was reborn as Indra in the Heaven. Then assuming the form of a young man he came from the heaven to meet his friend Kassapa. He gave the bow named sahassathamathanu to Kassapa in acknowledgement of latter's beneficence. *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript), pp. 12-20 (Part I).

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window of her palace and "her heart became as if it had melted away from the surface of her skin, entering her sinews, large and small, biting into bones of her skull, as if it had melted all through her body. Her body shook as if she was a sorceress possessed by a spirit." Losing consciousness she fell down inside the palace.

Rāma grasped the bow and raised it on to his elbow as easily as a woman raises her cotton gin. With an arrow, he flicked the bow-string producing a mighty sound like thunder in the ocean.

After witnessing his great powers, hundred and one kings of Jambūdvīpa paid their homage to Rāma and the sage gave the hand of Nang Sīdā to him. Accompanied by his younger brother and wife, Rāma set forth on his journey back home.[11]

Abduction of Nang Sīdā

Indra saw that his chief queen, Nang Sujātā, reincarnated as Sīdā, was not going to attain her objective of avenging Raphanasuan since she was attached to Rāma and Lakkhana. So he came down, and turning himself into a golden deer, passed in front of Nang Sīdā, since Sīdā insisted on getting the golden deer, Rāma followed the animal, leaving her to the care of Lakkhana. After waiting for a long time, Lakkhana entrusted Nang Sīdā to the care of the Earth goddess and proceeded in search of his elder brother.

Perceiving with his divine eyes that Nang Sīdā was alone in the middle of the forest, Raphanasuan came hurriedly from Laṅkā in order to take her away. However, he failed in his first two attempts since the Earth held her firmly. In the meantime Lakkhana reached his elder brother Rāma. The latter asked, "Where did you leave Nang Sīdā?" Lakkhana replied, "I have come to you after entrusting her to the care of the Earth." Rāma said (distrustfully), "How could the Earth be a shelter for some one?" Hearing this, the Earth released Nang Sīdā from her hold, and Raphanasuan could finally take her off to Laṅkā.[12]

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[11] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 14-40, part I).
[12] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 41-47, part I).

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Rāma's meeting with Sukhīp

After Raphanasuan had carried Nang Sīdā off, the golden deer disappeared. On his return, Rāma did not find Nang Sīdā where he had left her. Weeping and wailing he began to search for his beloved wife in the forest and mountains remembering her qualities as a perfect wife.

One day, completely exhausted by fatigue and thirst, Rāma sat under the shade of a banyan tree, and asked his younger brother, Lakkhana to bring drinking water from a stream. After drinking a little, Rāma found that it was in fact tears. Thinking that some one afflicted with grief might be sitting and weeping nearby, Rāma, in the company of his younger brother, proceeded to search for the person, and found Sukhīp weeping (at the source of the stream).[13]

Episode of Thuaraphi

Sukhīp related the tale of his misfortune to Rāma and Lakkhana as follows :

> "A group of buffaloes, Thuaraphi—with huge body and sharp horns—came to the city of Kāśī and pierced the people with their horns. Those buffaloes instructed each other to gore accurately. The elder among them struck at the Hmak Kham Pom tree. When the fruits fell down, he intercepted them all with his horns; he did not let any fruit fall on the ground. The inhabitants of Kāśī were starved to death because they could not go to work in their fields. The dignitaries of the kingdom reported the matter to my elder brother Phāri. Phāri announced a reward of one thousand gold (pieces) to one who could chase these buffaloes away. However, none was able to do so. The buffaloes continued to pierce the people with their horns. When Nang Kāśī Rajathida was unable to persuade both of us to fight with the buffaloes, she said angrily, "If no one is able to fight with the buffaloes, I, a woman, shall go and fight them out." Having spoken thus, she proceeded to fight with them although she was in an advance stage of pregnancy. Her womb was big and heavy and she had the strength of an elephant. She put on

13 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 48-53, part I).

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unique ornaments. In the course of the duel, she killed many buffaloes, but finally a buffalo rendered her blind, piercing both her eyes. She was wounded and rolled on the ground. Her skirt, torn into pieces, was scattered all over. Thinking her dead, the buffaloes went away.

"When she was carried to the city it was found that the child in her womb had come out and was lodged in her vagina (*yoni*). Pushing his hands inside, someone took out a male child who was called Ongkhot because his body was curved at several places. Since her womb was still bulging out someone again pushed his hands inside and found out another child who was called Valayot "because her womb was seen again."[14]

"After the buffaloes had pierced our younger sister, both of us took out our weapons and went to kill them. Though we slashed many of them to death, all were not killed. The surviving buffaloes ran into a cave. When both of us arrived at the mouth of the cave, Phāri, my elder brother, said to me. "You should wait for me here. If you see thick blood coming out, it will be buffalo's blood. In this case you should wait for me. If you see clear and thin blood, it will be my blood. Then you should go back and rule the kingdom of Kāśī." After giving me this instruction, Phāri went inside the cave and slashed the buffaloes to death. Seeing that clear and thin blood was streaming out I thought my brother dead and returned to rule the kingdom of Kāśī. After killing all the buffaloes Phāri came out, but he did not see me. He was very angry, and after returning to Kāśī, he drove me out of the city."[15]

Episode of Nanthiyak

Nanthiyak had poisonous hands. When he pointed at anybody, the person died. The king Thattarattha announced a reward for one who could kill the demon. A lady named Khanthaphi offered herself for this task. She approached the great demon and allured him using the thirty-two characteristics

[14] The name Ongkhot is clearly explained in the text, but the explanation of the term Valayot is not clear.

[15] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 54-66, part I).

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of women. She said, "I am worthy to be your wife, but you are not worthy to be my husband." Thereupon, the great demon assured her, "I shall do what you want me to do." Then Nang Khanthaphi began to dance. The demon also got up and danced with her. Nang Khanthaphi raised her arm and pointed her fingers towards her head. Not realising that his hand was poisonous, the demon pointed his finger at his head (in an attempt to learn every movement from her). He instantly fell down and died.[16]

Birth of Hualaman

When Nang Khanthaphi returned, the King Thattarattha inquired how she could kill the demon Nanthiyak. In order to explain this she made a demonstration of the dance which she had displayed before the demon. Seeing her exquisite dance, the king was so much overpowered by passion that his semen flowed down. Nang Khanthaphi collected the semen and wandered about to dispose it off. She found Nang Kāśī, the blind mother of Ongkhot and Valayot lying under the shade of a fig tree. She put the semen in the mouth of the blind lady who consequently gave birth to a son called Hualaman (Hanumān).[17]

Hualaman leaps towards the Sun

Hualaman's mother died seven days after his birth. Before dying she advised her son to take the fig as his food, recalling how she could survive for sometime under the fig tree. One day, Hualaman saw the shining red sun emerging from the crest of the mountain, and taking it to be a ripe fig, he rose into the sky in order to get it. Since he perched on the chariot of the Sun god, his body was completely burnt. The Sun god turned and saw the blood bubbles on the chariot. Thinking that a creature possessing great spiritual merits might have been killed, he applied the liquid *Nam Chai Khai* on the bubbles of blood. Hualaman rose again with more spiritual powers than before. Now he could turn himself into any thing he liked.[18]

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16 *The Khavay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 66-68, part I)

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70 (part I).

18 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, p. 70, part I).

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Phāri Killed by Rāma

Though Rāma wanted to help his ally, Sukhīp against Phāri, he thought it unrighteous to invade the latter's kingdom of Kāśī. Keeping in view the antique maxim—"a king who follows his enemy in a foreign territory, is guilty" he suggested to Sukhīp to provoke Phāri for a duel and bring him out of his kingdom. He also advised his ally to put a white piece of cloth around his head, so that it might be possible to distinguish him from Phāri.

Following Rāma's advice, Sukhīp flew, over the city of Kāśī and challenged his elder brother. Grasping his bow and quiver Phāri rose into the sky for a duel. After fighting for some time, Sukhīp retreated to the territory of Rāma (and Phāri followed him). Rāma shot an arrow at Phāri. Grasping the arrow firmly Phāri asked, "Why did you shoot at me?" Rāma replied, "Sukhīp entered into my dwelling in order to take asylum with me. Why did you follow him in my territory? You are guilty. If you love your life, let the arrow wound you slightly and take out of your body as much blood as is required by a fly to satisfy itself." Phāri replied, "I belong to the lineage of a great monarch. I shall be greatly ashamed before my people even if a little of my blood like a grain of sesame drops (from my body). It is better I die."

The powerful arrow, which Phāri could not hold any longer pierced him to death.[19]

Hualaman in Search of Nang Sīdā

After being crowned as the king of Kāśī, Sukhīp offered his three nephews, Ongkhot, Valayat and Hualaman to Rāma and Lakkhana, and made preparations to escort them to their capital Kururathanakhon.

At Kururathanakhon, Rāma assembled all the kings of Jambūdvīpa in order to discuss the ways and means to search for Sīdā. The name of Hualaman was suggested for a mission to Laṅkā. Since Rāma was sceptic about Hualaman's capabilities, the latter hovered over the city of Kururathanakhon, rose up to the height of Mount Yukhanthon and ran around the universe in order to demonstrate his supernatural powers.

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[19] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 71-76, part I).

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Pressing the earth with his heels he sprang off and rose into the sky with such rapidity that he passed over the city of Laṅkā and travelled further for seven days. Finally, he fell into the hermitage of a sage, named Pha Rot Ta Fai who reduced him to ashes. Only a little clot of his heart's blood was stuck to the door of the hermitage. The hermit sprinkled *Nam Chai Khai* on the patch of the blood and instantly Hualaman rose to life. On the request of the hermit he stayed in the hermitage for the night. The hermit took some measures so that Hualaman's supernatural powers might be reduced and he might not pass over the city of Laṅkā again.

When it was dawn, the sage went for alms-begging to the yonder 'Udonkuruthīp' (Uttarakurudvīpa). Before departing, he instructed Hualaman to use a bamboo twig as tooth brush and to wash his face in the pond of the hermitage. He cautioned him, "In the pond, there is a blood-sucking leech. It may bite you. You will try to pull it out, but it will not drop from your body. The medicine to cause it fall from your body, is in your body itself." Following the instructions of the hermit, Hualaman brushed his teeth with a bamboo twig and then went to wash his face in the pond. In fact, the blood-sucking leech stuck to his forehead. He rubbed his forehead against a palm tree. He jumped and rose up to Mount Yukhanthon. But the blood-sucking leech remained stuck to his forehead. Remembering the hermit's suggestion that the medicine to remove the leech could be found in his body itself, he thought of saliva in his mouth and applied it on the blood-sucking leech. The leech instantly dropped from his body. He wiped out the blood with the tip of a towel and then sat on the towel. Hualaman lost his supernatural powers for a period of seven days for the following three reasons : In the first place, he took the bamboo twig to brush his teeth, secondly, the blood-sucking leech bit him, and finally, he sat on the towel with which he wiped the blood of his forehead.

When the hermit returned after alms-begging, he offered a small ball of rice to Hualaman. The latter thought, "How would this little ball of rice be enough for me?" Reading his mind the hermit formulated the following vow : "May Hualaman not be able to finish this little ball of rice." In fact, the rice could not be exhausted even when Hualaman had eaten to his fill. So he

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put the remaining rice in his jaw. The hermit then explained to Hualaman the way to Laṅkā. But he could not go through the sky since his supernatural powers were lost temporarily. "He took out his monkey (self) and transformed it into a horse," and rode for seven days before he reached the city of Laṅkā. He looked around in the city, but did not find Nang Sīdā anywhere. He then turned himself into an old man and roamed about in the outskirts of the city. He gathered from the conversation of two maid-servants that their mistress Nang Sīdā was kept in a garden.

Hualaman approached Nang Sīdā in the garden and offered her the signet ring which Rāma had asked him to carry with him. Hualaman requested her to return with him. Nang Sīdā replied, "If I go with you, there will be suspicion since you are a man and I am a woman. The world will ciriticise me.... When Phra Rāma along with his envoys comes in his boat and begs Raphanasuan for my release, and if Raphanasuan releases me, I shall return. If not, Phra Rāma should come with his army and fight to take me back."

After knowing Nang Sīdā's decision, Hualaman entered into the city of Laṅkā and ascended to the palace of Raphanasuan. He tiptoed near Raphanasuan who was sleeping with his wife. Tying their hairs tightly together, he wrote on the window : "The queen should clench her fist and strike at the head of the king in order to unite the knot." Then be pulled the pillow from under their heads. They woke up as their heads fell from the pillow.

As a result of his queen acting according to the above instruction, Raphanasuan lost his divine vision. He was very angry and sent his people in search of the evil-doer. They found only a small monkey. In an effort to kill the monkey, they put him in a mortar. But when the pestle descended over him, he turned and climbed up to the other end of the pestle. They tried to slash him to death. But when the sword descended upon him, he climbed upon the blunt edge of the sword. Finally they wrapped him with the oil-soaked cloth and set fire to him. He burnt the city of Laṅkā. Then he jumped into the ocean and after extinguishing the fire on his body, he returned to Rāma.[20]

[20] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 77-78, part I).

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Ongkhot's Mission to Laṅkā

Ongkhot was sent to Laṅkā with a letter and adequate presents in order to beg Nang Sīdā's release. Raphanasuan declared that Nang Sīdā would be released if Rāma was able to construct rafts in succession over the ocean linking the city of Laṅkā with the opposite shore.[21]

Construction of Rafts over the Ocean

After Ongkhot's mission to Laṅkā, all the kings of Jambūdvīpa offered their troops to Rāma, and all quadrupeds and bipeds, barring a few exceptions, volunteered themselves for the construction of rafts. Hualaman played an important role in the enterprise. Making rafts in succession for seven years, Rāma arrived at the Island of Laṅkā.[22]

Hualaman's Relations with the Princess of the Underworld

One day, when the great noise produced by the construction of rafts, troubled the king of the city of Pattalum in the bottom of the ocean, he asked his daughter to go and inquire about the matter. Turning herself into a fish, she came up and saw Hualaman toiling and sweating over the construction of rafts. After having swallowed the sweat, which had rolled from Hualaman's body, she gave birth to a son called Rotthayi.[23]

Banishment of Phik Phi

Rāma sent Valayot with a letter announcing the completion of the construction of rafts over the ocean, and requesting the release of Nang Sīdā. However, Raphanasuan refused to give Nang Sīdā back and called his younger brother Phik Phi for an astrological consultation. On Phik Phi's prediction of bad luck for the kingdom of Laṅkā and its king before the enemy's messenger, Raphanasuan became very angry and banished him from Laṅkā. Phik Phi then joined the camp of Rāma.[24]

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21 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 97-98, part I).

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-7 (part II)

23 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, p. 6, part II).

24 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 4-10, part II).

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Abduction of Rāma

After looking into Rāma's future, Phik Phi foretold, "On the seventh day, bad luck will befall you. You will almost die." Thereupon, all protective measures were taken for his safety. Hualaman, who was appointed to protect the region of the sky, expanded his palm and protected the entire area. The princes and officials were given the charge of the surface of the earth.

On the seventh day, the king of Pattalum (Pātāla) came from under-world kingdom in order to retaliate the birth of an illegitimae child to his daughter. And carrying Rāma to his palace, the king put him in an iron cage.

When Rāma was found missing from the camp, Phik Phi explained the matter, and showed the way to the kingdom of Pattalum to Hualaman. After arriving in the city of Pattalum through the hole of a lotus stalk, Hualaman turned himself into an old man. He met two servants of the king of Pattalum, who were going to the world of mortals in order to search for the poisonous liquid to kill Rāma. He killed the two servants, and then transforming himself into a fly, and perching on the shoulder of a maiden, he entered the palace. He delivered Rāma after smashing the cage into pieces. In the course of a battle which followed Rāma's release, the king of Pattalum was defeated. Hualaman recognised his son Rotthayi and crowned him as the king of Pattalum.[25]

Battle of Laṅkā

After a battle between Lakkhana and Inthasik (Indrajit), Rāma and Raphanasuan fought several battles. Going up to the height of Mt. Yukhanthon the two warriors shot arrows at each other. Raphanasuan's arrows fell down and became banana leaves in the world of mortals. Each time when Rāma beheaded Raphanasuan, a new head emerged. The *thevada* (*devata*), *kumphanna, yak* (*yaksha*), *kut* (*garuda*) and *nak* (*nāga*) came to witness the great war and wished victory for Rāma over Raphanasuan who committed two sinful acts; he had seduced Indra's wife, Nang Sujātā, and had carried Nang Sīdā away.

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[25] *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 11-17, part II).

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Phik Phi informed Rāma that Raphanasuan could not be killed with any weapon other than Thasaphon or Vasir, which was lying in the bed of the ocean, and was guarded by a mighty demon. When the demon opened his mouth, the animals or fish automatically rushed in, even if they were at a distance of one hundred *yojanas*.[26]

Hualaman set off to obtain this weapon. Turning himself into a red fly, he entered into the space between the teeth of the demon. Then he crawled further and pressed the demon's neck with his hands. The demon surrendered and agreed to offer him the arrow. When Hualaman pulled out the arrow, a big hole was formed in the bed of the ocean. The water poured in the hole and the level of the ocean lowered down. Examining the level of the ocean, Rāma knew about Hualaman's success in advance. Before too long Hualaman brought the arrow to him.

In the final battle, Raphanasuan stretched himself to the heights of Mount Yukhanthon, and to encounter him, Rāma mounted on Hualaman's shoulder and shot the arrow Thasaphon which instantly killed Raphanasuan. After crowning Phik Phi as the king of Laṅkā, Rāma returned to his kingdom of Kururathanakhon in the company of Nang Sīdā and Lakkhana.

Since the kingdom of Kururathanakhon was over-crowded, Rāma made new settlements of Lavo, Phitsanuloka, Nakhonsavan, Nanthirat and Ayuthiyā, all situated in modren Thailand. Finally, he made Ayuthiyā the capital of his kingdom.[27]

Raphanasuan's Portrait Drawn by Nang Sīdā

Rāma had 16,000 maidens among whom his wife Nang Sīdā was the first. One day, when he was on tour of Ayuthiyā, Nang Sīdā made a portrait of Raphanasuan on the request of some of the palace maidens. Rāma returned in the meantime, and the stone-slab, on which the portrait was drawn, was concealed under the royal seat. When Rāma took his seat, the portrait spoke, "Both of us belong to the royal lineage. Why are you sitting on my head?"

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26 One *yojana* is equal to 8 or 9 miles

27 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 18-34, part II).

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When Rāma found Raphanasuan's portrait under his seat and knew that Nang Sīdā had herself drawn it, he said angrily, "Devil! I could bring you back after making efforts for several years and months, and after losing many men, elephants and horses. Now you have a lover in addition to your husband and you have drawn his portrait in order to admire him."

Lakkhana took the responsibility of executing Nang Sīdā. But later he renounced to do so as she was pregnant. Indra also intervened in the matter. He came down and turned himself into a newly dead dog. Lakkhana slashed the dead dog and carried his sword stained with its blood to convince Rāma of Nang Sīdā's execution.

Nang Sīdā took shelter in the hermitage of the sage Tiphachakkhu (Divyacakṣus) where she gave birth to a child called Phra But. Later the sage made an image of Phra But and gave it life through his incantations. The sage's creation was named Phra Hup.

When he knew about his father from Nang Sīdā, Phra But along with Phra Hup, left for the the city of Ayuthiyā. In the neighbourhood of the capital, they met two female vendors of cucumber whom they accompanied to the market. As a result of Phra But's refusal to pay tax to the agents of Hualaman, a battle took place in which Hualaman was wounded and he left the city to live on "the Jambu tree, the symbol of the continent."

Rāma followed the two princes, but he was unable to defeat them. Then Phra But took the following vow : "If the person, who is shooting at me, is really my father, may my arrow entwine his body like a liana and then return to me." Since Phra But's vow came to be true, he recognised his father Rāma. Finally the two princes were escorted to the palace and were crowned to rule half of the kingdom.

In the company of the two princes, Rāma and Lakkhana went to the hermitage, and after taking permission of the sage, they brought Nang Sīdā back to Ayuthiyā. Phra But and Phra Hup were crowned as rulers of Ayuthiyā.

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After passing away from the world of mortals, Nang Sīdā rose to the dwelling of Indra and was reborn as Nang Sujātā, the chief queen of Indra.[28]

The Geographical Setting of the Story

The whole story is built around three princes descending from the same royal line—Raphanasuan, Rāma and Phari ruling over the kingdom of Laṅkā, Kururathanakhon and Kāśī respectively.

The kingdom of Kāśī seems to be identical with the city of the same name situated in the northern part of Laos. In fact, according to the local legends, the bones of the buffalo Thuaraphi are still preserved in the vicinity of Muong Kāśī.

In the present state of our knowledge, it does not seem possible to locate the island kingdom of Laṅkā mentioned in this text.[29] The narrator includes Kururathanakhon in Jambūdvīpa and describes Rāma, the king of Kururathanakhon,[30] as the overlord of one hundred and one kings of Jambūdvīpa.[31] From his description, it seems that the island of Laṅkā was outside the territory of Jambūdvīpa.

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28 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 31-67, part I).

29 It has been suggested that Laṅkā, mentioned in the Lao text, should be identified with Laṅkāsuk in the Malay Peninsula. Dhani Nivat, "The Rāma Jātaka" (*Collection of Articles by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat,* the Siam Society, Bangkok, 1969, p. 88). In my opinion Laṅkā corresponds to Śrī Laṅkā in the Laotian versions of the Rāma story, since the Buddhist writers of Laos are expected to be more familiar with this island (Ceylon). (*Cf. the Phra Lak Phra Lam,* part I, p. XLII, n. 6).

30 The country of Kuru, one of the sixteen Mahājanapadas, is frequently mentioned in the Buddhist literature. According to a tradition recorded by Buddhaghoṣa, when Māndhātā returned to Jambūdvīpa from his sojourn in the four Mahādvīpas and in the devalokas, there were in his retinue a large number of the people of Uttarakuru. They settled down in Jambūdvīpa, and their settlement was known as Kururattha. G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names,* Luzac & Co. Ltd., London, 1960, vol. I., p. 641.

31 Jambūdvīpa is one of the four Mahādvīpas or great continents included in the universe. According to Buddhist texts (*Vinaya Piṭaka*, I. 30; *Sutta Nipāta*, II. 443; *Visuddhimagga*, I. 205f.; *Samantapāsādikā* I. II), this continent derives its name from the Jambū tree. This explanation is also offered by the author of the *Khvay Thuaraphi*. Supra, p. 20.

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The kingdom of Pattalum[32] situated in the bed of the ocean appears to be a mythical place name. Udonkuruthip (Uttarakurudvīpa)[33] and Mount Yukhanthon (Yugandhara)[34], mentioned in the text, are well-known from Indian sources, but we do not know if these mythical place-names were actually used in the Laotian topography.

After the victory of Laṅkā the narrator relates the founding of new settlements by Rāma. It is significant that the legend regarding these settlements in modern Thailand is identical with one which is narrated in the *Phra Lak Phra Lam.*[35] It seems that the legend was popular in Laos and some parts of Thailand, and was incorporated independently into two versions.

After shooting his arrow Thasaphon to the north-west, Rāma ordered Hualaman to follow the arrow carrying Mount Sapphaya on his palm, and to place the Mount where it fell. Accordingly, Hualaman placed the Mount where the arrow fell and after clearing the area, he waited for Rāma. Since Hualaman had cleared the area without fixing an auspicious day for the work, Rāma abandoned (*la*) that place, and as such it was called Lavo (Lopburi).

Rāma established another city called Phitsanuloka. He descended along the river still further and stayed in an area where his people made festivities for seven days. They felt as if they were in Heaven (*savan*), and so the place was called Nakhonsavan (the heavenly city). An aged man suggested to Rāma that the area around a neighbouring hill was suitable for settlement if a demon named Nanthirat and his one thousand attendants, who protected the hill, could be conquered. Rāma proceeded to the hill and shot an arrow at the demon who fled to the north-east of Lavo. The hungry demon ordered his attendants to bring sour fruit for him. But due to supernatural

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32 For the identification of this kingdom with Phattalung near Nakhon Sri Thammaraja, see Prince Dhani Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

33 Uttarakuru is often mentioned in the Buddhist literature as a mythical region. *Cf.*, G.P. Malalasekera, *op. cit.*, vol I. p. 355. Some of the Laotian monks understand by Udonkuruthip the area of Udon in the north-east Thailand.

34 Yugandhara is supposed to be one of the mountains of the Himalaya. *Cf.*, G.P. Malalasekara, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 695.

35 *The Phra Lak Phra Lam*, part II, pp. 391 ff.

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powers of Rāma's arrow, all fruits of the area turned sweet. The demon died since he could not get sour fruit. As his dead body was covered with rocks and earth, a mound called Nanthirat rose there. In the vicinity of this mound, Rāma built a city and constructed a boundary wall around it. The city was called Ayuthiyā.[36]

Folklore in the Story

Folklore elements have been introduced in the story in an effort to enhance the popular appeal of the narrative. Though the legends are quite naive, they lend local colour to the story. The text offers some interesting motifs and new material for the study of folklore in Laos.

Origin of the Skirt (Sin)

Nang Kasi Rājathida, the wife of Phāri, was wounded in a duel with the buffalo Thuaraphi. She rolled naked on the ground since her skirt (*sin*) was torn to pieces and flew all over. The people re-assmebled these pieces, and adding some new pieces they made a new skirt. The art of making beautiful skirts with several pieces dates from that event.[37]

Horns of the Buffalo

While fighting with the buffaloes, Nang Kasirajathida was pierced by one of them. Because she fell on the buffalo's horns, they were bent backward and were curved. Since then all the buffaloes have their horns curved and bent backward.[38]

The Monkeys

On his way to Laṅkā, the monkey Hualaman arrived at the dwelling of a sage and stayed there for a night. Next morning, while he was washing his face in the pond of the hermitage, a blood-sucking leech bit him. When he applied his saliva on the leech, it dropped from his forehead. With the tip of a towel, he

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36 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 26-32, part II).

37 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 60-61, part I).

38 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, p. 81, part I), Praphulladatta Goswāmi, in his work *Ballads and Tales of Assam* (Gauhati, 1970, 2nd ed, p. 185), refers to a motif explaining why the buffalo's back became arched.

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wiped off the blood from his forehead and then stroked his body with the towel. Since then the monkeys have red hair.[39]

The sage offered a small ball of rice to Hualaman. The monkey ate to his fill, but he could not finish the small quantity of rice due to supernatural powers of the sage. So he put the remaining rice in his jaw. Since then the monkeys have the habit of putting things in their jaw.[40]

When Hualaman's body had caught fire, he ran up to the palace of Laṅkā's king and burned the palace. Since then, when a monkey's body catches fire, he dares to go up to the roof of the house.[41]

When Rāma did not believe Hualaman's claim that he had burned the palace of Raphanasuan in Laṅkā, the monkey said, "I beg you, Great King, to cover your ears with your hands and listen. You will hear the crackling sound, "*Hup!! Thup!!*" of fire burning the palace of Laṅkā's king." This kind of noise is heard even this day.[42]

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39 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 87-89, part I).
40 *The Khvay Thuaraphi* (manuscript, pp. 89-90, part I).
41 *Ibid.*, p. 97 (part I).
42 *Ibid.*, p. 98 (Part I).

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN BURMESE LITERATURE AND ARTS

By **U. THEIN HAN and U. KHIN ZAW**

INTRODUCTION

In Burma, so far as our researchers on *Rāmāyaṇa* up to 1972 reveal, the earliest written work is the *Rāma Thagyin* of 1775 by U Aung Phyo. But in 1973 a new find was made of two palm-leaf MSS of Rāma story called the *Rāma Vatthu*, one in a Buddhist monastery in Pagan-Nyaung-U area and the other in a monastery (Kyaikwaing) near Rangoon. On studying this Rāma story in these two newly found MSS., it is found that the coloquial style, the use of archaic spelling symbols and U Aung Phyo's own admission (that he based his *Thagyin* on an older Rāma story) support the theory that the newly discovered *Rāma Vatthu* was reduced to writing in the 17th century A.D.

Oral tradition of the Rāma story, however, may be said to have started as far back as the reign of King Anawrahta of 11th century A.D. In Nat-hlaung kyaung (Visnhu Temple) in Old Pagan are stone figures of Rāma and Paraśu Rāma. So also in the *Jātaka* series of Terracotta plaques in Petleik pagoda contemporaneously in Old Pagan.

Besides, in a stone inscription in Mon language, King Kyansittha (1084-1113) proclaimed to his subjects that he had in a previous existence been a close relative of Rāma in Ayodhyā. The presence of Vaishṇava Brāhmanas in Old Pagan who played important parts in the royal ceremonial occassions of those days is also one historical factor. All these are pointed out by scholars as evidences of Rāma tradition then extant—handed down from mouth to mouth up to the end of 16th century, as one post-Pagan evidence is found in the Epilogue of *Suvanna Sama Jātaka* poem written in 1527. And again there is the mention of Bibhīshana by Minkyaung Sayadaw in his commentary on a well-known Epistle in the 18th century, and also a citation of Rāṁa in Mani Ket play in the same century.

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It is, therefore, considered that the oral tradition of Rāma story based on some tradition of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* in Old Pagan attained, in the course of 600 years, to the status of the *Rāma Vatthu* in the 17th century amidst the infleunces of the Indian recensions and also a result of Burma's contact with Linzin (Laos), Zinmai (Chiengmai), Ayuthia (Thailand) and Malaya.

RĀMĀYAṆA IN BURMESE LITERATURE

Considering the line of development in the Burmese versions of Rāma story, we can count up to 9, out of which 3 are in prose, 3 in verse and 3 in drama, the last version published in 1910. They are as follows :

(A) Prose. *Rāma Vatthu* (17th century)
Mahā Rāma (late 18th century or early 19th century)
Rāma Thonmyo (1904) by Saya Htwe.

(B) Poetry. *Rāma Thagyin* (1775) by U Aung Phyo.
Rāma Yagan (1784) by U Toe.
Alaung Rāma Thagyin (1905) by Saya Htun of Akyab.

(C) Drama. *Thiri Rāma* (late 18th century or early 19th century) by Nemyo Nāṭaka Kyaw Gaung.
Pontaw Rāma, Pt. I (1880) by Saya Ku.
Pontaw Rāma and Lakkhana, Pt I (1910) by U Maung Gyi.

Rāma Vatthu

It is considered that as the *Rāma Vatthu* of the 17th century has, hitherto, been regarded as the earliest literary version in Burma, a short summary of the *Rāma Vatthu** may be given in this paper, just for the sake of analysis of its characteristics and of evaluation, of its merits.

Speaking in terms of Kāṇḍas, the content of the story in the palm-leaf MSS covers seven Kāṇḍas from Bāla to Uttara, but the story is not told Kāṇḍa by Kāṇḍa. Instead, it is first narrated in 6 chapters up to Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa, and then the rest in a single chapter up to Uttara Kāṇḍa.

* See Appendix I.

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Regarding the characteristics of the *Rāma Vatthu*, five points will be discussed in this paper.

Firstly, it is found that the plot is well conceived and well laid out. The fore-shadowing of Daśagiri's physical and moral violence narrated in the beginning of the story serves as a key to the gradual unfolding of the plot and makes his downfall inevitable at the end.

Secondly, Hindu holiness of Rāma in *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* is replaced by Buddhist holiness in the personality of Rāma in the *Rāma Vatthu*. Rāma the Bodhisat King is the appellation repeatedly used in the Burmese story. For instance, in the *Rāma Vatthu*, the story describes that Inda implores the Bodhisat Deva and three other in Tuṣita Heavan to incarnate as men in Ayodhyā, and also millions of other Devas to incarnate as mighty *Vānaras* (apes) in Kitha Kinda. This description reminds any Buddhist of the account of the birth of Siddhartha, the last Bodhisat prince in the life of Gotama Buddha. Only one word Vishnu is used as a simile in the story, when Sītā, in her reply to Daśagiri in Aśoka gaden, threatens that he will be killed by Rāma, her husband, "who is like Vishnu." Since then the appellation of Rāma the Bodhisat has been constantly used in almost all the Burmese versions except *Thiri Rāma*.

Thirdly, it is found that the author of the *Rāma Vatthu* places a great emphasis on the human elements, devoting not less than 50 pages in his work of 80 palm-leaf MSS pages. It appears that he is aware of the spirit of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. His portrayal of Rāma as an obedient son, a loving brother, a faithful husband, a chivalrous fighter, a righteous prince and a wise leader; of Lakkhana as an affectionate and loyal brother; of Sītā as a chaste, loving and patient wife; of Hanumān as a loyal and efficient lieutenant and of Daśagiri as a sinful and arrogant monarch is impressive and effective.

Fourthly, the *Rāma Vatthu* has taste and restraint in the use of battle scenes which are surprisingly few in number. Only about 4 or 5 battles are described in the Yuddha Kāṇḍa section of the *Vatthu*. It is obvious that human elements and supernatural elements are well balanced in the Burmese story. In other words

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emphasis is wisely place on *Karuṇa* and *Vīra rasas* on the one hand and *Bhayānaka* and *Raudra rasas* on the other.

Lastly, the *Rāma Vatthu* has several omissions and innovations. For example the episodes of Jaṭāyu, Sampāti, Garuḍa, Kabandha and of many demon chiefs and fighters are omitted. Regarding the innovations, the following examples are adequate enough for evidence. Familiar Burmese form of address "Maung" is prefixed to Rāma several times. King Daśaratha and Vālmīki call Rāma "Maung Rāma." Another example is the meeting of Rāma with Thugyeik (Sugrīva) in the forest. After searching for Sītā in vain, Rāma and Lakkhana take rest at the foot of a big tree on which Thugyeik is forced to hide, after his banishment. The tired Rāma, resting his head on the chest of Lakkhana, sleeps soundly when a giant gadfly comes upon the back of Lakkhana and sucks the blood. Lakkhana, in spite of great pain, restrains himself from driving off the gadfly, lest his brother's sleep should be disturbed. When Thugyeik notices Lakkhana patiently enduring the pain, the thought of his wicked brother comes to his mind. As he weeps, his big tear-drops fall on the chest of Rāma who is rudely roused from his sleep. At the sight of Thugyeik, Rāma takes up the bow. Thugyeik comes down and supplicates Rāma telling his woeful tale. Later Rāma enters into alliance with Thugyeik.

Considered as a whole, the *Rāma Vatthu* is found to be a simple story, in abridged form, remodelled by the Burmese author and accepted by the people in accordance with the ethical sense and aesthetic taste of the Burmese themselves. The facts of the story are few in number but the story makes no misrepresentations. It maintains the spirit of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* both in characterization and plot, and in motivation. In Burmese literature the *Rāma Vatthu* is considered to represent the traditional Burmese version. It has served as the well-spring of later Burmese versions, although the latter bring in several new episodes and new characters in the course of time. However, it is found that later versions are fundamentally faithful to the tradition.

Mahā Rāma

It was probably composed in late 18th century or early 19th century. This version in fact is a mere enlargement of the *Rāma*

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Vatthu. Prose is simple and dignified. Embellishment (Alaṅkāra) is richer. For instance, Sītā is described as being born of lotus-bud, instead of earth.

Its special feature is the insertion of 4 new episodes in Yuddha Kāṇḍa section. They are of Gombadipa (Mahirāvaṇa) carrying away Rāma to his underworld by his magic; of Yakkhani who transforms herself into the dead body of Sītā to deceive Rāma; Of Gamuttara who transforms himself into a putrid dog to prevent demon Thura Gomban from sharpening his powerful spear, and the demon Hman-pya burnt to ashes at the sight of his own deadly side-glance reflected in the mirror brought by Hanumān to the battle-field.

Rāma Thonmyo by Saya Htwe

It was published in 1904. According to Saya Htwe, his work is the product of what he has taken down from the verbal accounts of the marionette dramatist. Several deviations appear in the work. Some of the well-known names have become misnomers. For instance King Janaka has become Maha Zanapada; queen Kausalyā, Paduma Thinkha and queen Kaikeyī, Kakkaruvati. The most serious deviation is the account of Sītā immediately brought back to Rāma by Hanumān after the burning of Laṅkā. Of the few innovations, the episode of the Bow Contest is one. The Bow Contest invitation parchment with Sītā's portrait, blown away by the wind, fall into the hands of Daśagiri in Laṅkā. A well-known interpolation common to the South-East Asian vesions is the episode of Sītā and the She-monkey; and of the miraculous birth of Kuśa in Saya Htwe's work.

Rāma Thagyin by U Aung Phyo

In this poem U Aung Phyo uses the story of the *Rāma Vatthu* up to the end of Yuddha Kāṇḍa. The content of the poem is nearly the same as the content of the *Rāma Vatthu*. It is effective both in plot and characterization. U Aung Phyo, a professional balladist, roamed about the country-side and sang his *Thagyin* which is responsible for the popularity of the Rāma story even in remote villages.

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Rāma Yagan by U Toe

U Toe, poet and courtier composed his Yagan poem in 1784. The poem is incomplete, the last scene being the meeting of Rāma with Thygyeik under the Gyo tree (Schleichera Trijuga). There is fundamentally nothing new in the content of the poem, except that the Rāma story has inspired one of the best poems in Burmese literature. It is touched by local colour.

Alaung Rāma Thagyin by Saya Htun

Like U Aung Phyo, Saya Htun is a balladist well-known both in Arakan and in the valley of the Irrawaddy. He benefits from all the previous compositions so that this work is enriched by the accumulation. However, his work is not without Arakanese folk-ways in some dramatic situations. To cite an example: When Daśagiri, in order to test the prowess of Rāma on the eve of the Bow Contest, buries his spear deep in the ground and asks Rāma to pluck it out, Rāma does so easily with his toes.

Thiri Rāma by Nemyo Nāṭaka Kyaw Gaung

The drama was probably written in late 18th century or early 19th century. The dating is still as problematical as the dating of the *Mahā Rāma*. According to Nemyo, the drama is definitely a representation based on a certain earlier work. Perhaps that earlier work might have been a production of a Royal Cultural Commission appointed in 1789 in Amarapura, with a view to dramatising "the legends and stories brought from the Gyun (Krom) capital of the Kingdom of Ayuthia and the Yun capital of the Kingdom of Haripunja." However, if the production of the Commission were somewhat like the *Rāmakien* (1798) of Rāma I, which "was probably written on the model of an older work prevalent in Ayudhya but lost perhaps in the holocaust of 1767," the *Thiri Rāma* drama ought to bear some resemblance to the *Rāmakien*. But the *Thiri Rāma* drama is found to be a different work. Anyway the earlier work has not been discovered yet or might have been lost.

The drama of *Thiri Rāma* is writen both in prose and verse, and in three bundles having not less than 1320 palm-leaf MSS pages. There is no division into Acts but a continuous succession of scenes.

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Three remarkable features of the drama may be discussed. Firstly, there are some slight variations made in the traditional episodes. For instance, Inda goes to and implores Lord Nārāyaṇa, instead of the Bodhisat Deva, to incarnate as Rāma. Then the coming of uninvited Daśagiri to and the absence of Paraśu Rāma at the Bow Contest. Kakawun is replaced by a demon; and Gambi by Sappanakha. Mārīcha takes the part of the enchanted deer.

Secondly, some of the well-known episodes are totally omitted. For instance, there is no mention of a comb of ten plantain fruits in connection with the birth of the ten-headed Daśagiri. There is no longer the meeting of Rāma with Thugyeik under the Gyo tree. Hanumān knows no gentle stroking by Rāma in his back. There is no longer the havoc of Gandam crab at the construction of the cause-way across the strait. There is no Gamuttara disguised as a putrid dog, and no Yakkhani as the dead body of Sītā. No longer is there the drawing of Daśagiri's portrait by Sītā.

Thirdly new episodes and new characters are introduced in abundance. So much so the *Thiri Rāma* Drama looks like a literary offspring of the two Indian recensions of Bengali and Hindi. But the drama with several scenes dealing with the founding of Laṅkā by Panthnyakkha, the surrender of Laṅkā to Daśagiri by Kuvera, the birth of Mahirāvaṇa to Appathari, the second queen of Daśagiri, the birth of Pasvadithi to the third queen of Daśagiri, etc., is itself a good example. Further examples like the new battle-scenes, will make a long and tiring list, nearly all of which can be found in the two Indian recensions up to the last episode of Rāma stepping into the waters of the Tharazote river (Sarayū) and re-appearing as Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Pontaw Rāma, Pt. I by U Ku

The drama is written both in verse and prose. The dramatic situations selected by U Ku in his drama suggest that his theme is the Good withstanding the trials and tribulations imposed by the Evil. The drama opens with the scene of the banishment of Rāma, followed by the scenes of the departure; of Paraśu Rāma offering his Kingdom of San Pathavra to Rāma; of the death of Daśaratha at Ayodhyā; of Gambi and the destruction of her two

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sons by Rāma; of the enchanted deer and finally of the abduction of Sītā.

One innovation will be noticed in this drama, which is Paraśu Rāma's offering of his kingdom to the banished Rāma. Perhaps the noble gesture of Guha of Shringavera in the Indian recension is unwittingly transferred to Paraśu Rāma of the *Pontaw Rāma* play. This transplantation might be considered a misrepresentation. However, how noble is Paraśu Rāma in this innovation, although he is known to be the great rival of Rāma!

Pontaw Rāma and Lakkhana, Pt. I by U Maung Gyi

The drama is written both in verse and prose. It presents the story of the birth of Sītā. It appears that U Maung Gyi has used for his drama the information orally relayed by some of his Indian friends in Rangoon. His theme is the love of Sītā for Rāma.

According to the drama, Sītā in her previous existence is Sītā Yakkha demoness. She goes to the hermitage of Vaṣiṣṭha where dwell Rāma and Lakkhana. As she disturbs the peace of the hermitage, she is killed by the arrow of Rāma. Then she becomes goddess Sītā Caṇḍī in Catumaharit Heaven, still in love with Rāma. One day Daśagiri arrives at the Catumaharit and makes love to Sītā Caṇḍī who, being angry, vows that she be born out of the tusk of Daśagiri, and lays the curse that one thousand demons be killed every time she makes a baby cry. Then she holds her breath and dies. Since then Daśagiri's right tusk gives him trouble until the tusk finally gives birth to Sītā. The rest of the story is as usual.

This Drama is the last in the line of the Burmese versions which still wield an ennobling influence on the Burmese people.

RĀMĀYAṆA IN BURMESE ARTS

Evidence of the appreciation of Burmese *Rāmāyaṇa* can be found in Burmese arts and handicrafts, Burmese stage and Burmese music and song.

Handicrafts

In many pieces of lacquerware, in silver and gold thread embroidery, in painting and wood carving, for generations this

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appreciation is expressed in motifs of design and decoration. In Pakhan monastery built in the reign of King Mindon (1853–78) is a good example of wood carving. The most prominent example is the story of Rāma depicted in a continuous series of 347 stone relief sculptures at Mahā Loka Marazein pagoda in Upper Burma in 1849.

Stage

It is clear so far that the Rāma play was performed on the stage in full splendour in the royal palace beginning from the reign of King Bodawpaya (1782–1819). It was not specifically mentioned by name in the Burmese chronicles. But Michael Symes did so in his "An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava." It was when he was invited to a Rāma play by the Burmese Governor of Hanthawaddy in 1795. In King Thibaw's reign it was specifically mentioned by name in the Konbaungset Chronicle at the Ear boring ceremony of the young princess in 1884. Thus the Rāma play has been extant in Burma from the reign of King Bodawpaya to that of King Thibaw.

Michael Symes said the play was performed in the open air in the compound of the Governor of Hanthawaddy. The audience formed a circle round the arena of the show which was well lit up with flambeaux and lanterns. Still it must have been a far cry from the conditions in the palace in Amarapura. Nevertheless the strides taken by the live-stage development by the time of King Thibaw are nothing short of amazing. Traditionally no drop-curtains nor setting were used on the stage. There were usually two door-ways down-stage for the entry or exit of the actors. In some of the scenes the dancer was to express the theme and portray the moods and emotions through mimetic gestures and posturings, all in stylised form. Michael Symes also noted that the Burmese marionette stage was flourishing. According to Saya Htwe of *Rāma Thonmyo*, the Rāma play was also performed on the marionette stage.

Dramatic presentation

With regard to the presentation of the Rāma play, there seemed to be not much difference between the practice of those days and nowadays.

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If we analyse the Burmese presentation of the Rāma play as members of the audience watching the living stage or marionette stage, we notice four techniques : (1) Dramatic words and gestures. (2) Dramatic words interspersed with relevant songs. (3) Dramatic recitative with musical background. (4) Dance and miming to music pertaining to the dramatic situation.

For the first three techniques, the players lift up their masks for dialogue, recitation or singing. For the fourth technique here is an example. When Hanumān, in search of Sītā in Daśagiri stronghold in Laṅkā, enters the citadel, the musical direction to the orchestra is, "Play Chut" (the conventional music of stealth) and Hanumān proceeds dancing the stealthy approach.

We know from musical directions to the orchestras in the drama of *Thiri Rāma*, that Burmese and Yodaya (Ayuthia) types of orchestras were used. The specially composed mood music of modern radio and TV plays was unknown. But there were conventional musical pieces well-known to the audience for all moods and situations, as shown by Musical Directions* to both Burmese and Yodaya orchestras.

Over and above the songs and music that belong to the Rāma play, we have in the Burmese classical repertoire several songs inspired by the story of Rāma and Sītā. Some in classical Burmese tunes and some in tunes adapted from Yodaya tunes were used in the compositions with such themes as the luring away of Rāma by the enchanted deer, the abduction of Sītā, the lamentations of Sītā in Laṅkā and of Rāma in the Hmamyone forest and the meeting of Rāma with Thugyeik at the Gyo tree. Most of them were written in the late 19th century.

Rāma play after 1885

Rāma play on the Burmese stage did not have as happy a fate as Rāma play in Burmese literature. At the end of 1885 after the annexation of Upper Burma, the Palace Troupe numbering over a hundred were disorganised and displaced. Some of them banded together and ventured into the world of public entertainment, thus bringing the Rāma play to the masses. Some of them came down to Lower Burma, and in

* See Appendix II.

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towns where they settled they met Rāma-Play enthusiasts with whom they formed Rāma Play clubs and taught and coached more Rāma Play performers. Of them, the clubs in Rangoon and the one in the delta region are still carrying on the torch of Rāma tradition in the spirit of service to the community.

On the stage of the National Theatre of the Ministry of Culture, the emphasis is now on the fourth technique of Dance and miming to music in the attempt to revive the popularity of the Rāma Play, both at home and abroad, to capture the imagination of the new generation and to preserve the national heritage of the Burmese people, although the other three techniques are also in use.

APPENDIX I

(The story of Rāma is summarised with all the episodes in the same order or arrangement as described in the *Rāma Vatthu*.)

The first chapter deals with the origins of Daśagiri (Rāvaṇa) and his brothers and the story of Bāli. The chapter describes how the ten-headed Daśagiri is born to Gonti, as a result of Gonti's austerities and her offering of a Comb of ten plantain fruits to Brahmā; and how Kumba Kanna and Bibhizana are born later.

Then the chapter further describes how Daśagiri is crowned King of Laṅkā; how he morally degenerates due to his excessive love of intoxicating juice of flowers and fruits offered by the gods; how he insults the Gandhaba Fairy on the Kelatha mountain; and then how the fairy curses him and descending to the earth enters the holy flames.

In the same chapter Bāli in Kitha Kinda seizes Daśagiri who yields to the might of Bāli and becomes friends with him.

The second chapter deals with the birth of Rāma and the three brothers in Ayodhyā. It describes how Daśaratha, on one of his hunting expeditions, has unwittingly killed a young hermit; how Daśaratha receives two sacred plantains as a boon for progeny; and how his three queens later eat them.

The chapter further describes how, in the meantime, the guardian gods of the earth make a request of Brahmā through Inda for the destruction of sinful Daśagiri; how the Bodhisat Deva and three others in Tuṣita Heaven incarnate as Rāma and his three brothers; and how the other devas incarnate as *Vānaras* in Kitha Kinda.

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The third chapter deals with the birth of Sītā. It describes how the Gandhaba fairy is born of earth, brought to Laṅkā, put in an iron box and sunk in the ocean by Daśagiri; then how the iron box reaches Mithilā and how King Janaka adopts Sītā as his own daughter.

The fourth chapter deals with Bow contest at Mithilā. At this stage the story of Rāma begins to move. The baby has grown up into a beautiful maiden who is now the cynosure of a hundred kings. The problem is solved by Janaka by sending invitations to all of them including Daśagiri and Paraśu Rāma. At the Bow Contest, Daśagiri alone is able to lift up the bow. Although he cannot string the bow, he insolently demands the hand of Sītā.

The chapter further describes how Rāma and Lakkhana who, having punished Kakawun, the demon crow, accompanies their guru to Mithilā to see the bow and how at the critical moment Rāma enters the Bow Contest, lifts up and strings the bow and wins Sītā. Then after the nuptials of Rāma and the three brothers at Mithilā, they return to Ayodhyā. On the way Paraśu Rāma being instigated by the loser kings attempts to fight Rāma, but the attempt is foiled.

The fifth chapter deals with banishment of Rāma. At Ayodhyā queen Kokei (Kaikeyī), being misguided by the malicious Kupaci, enters the House of Anger, reminds Daśaratha of his solemn promise, and demands him to banish Rāma and enthrone his son Bharata. Then follow the scenes of Daśaratha's agonies; of Rāma's resolve to uphold the pledge of his father; of Sītā's courage; of Lakkhana's loyalty; of the willing consent of Kosalla (Kausalyā) and Thumitta (Sumitrā); of Rāma's pathetic partings; of the sorrows of the people of Ayodhyā; of the Departure of Rāma, Sītā and Lakkhana; and of their arrival at the hermitage of Vālamīgi (Vālmīki).

The sixth chapter deals with Bharata's attempt to enthrone Rāma and the birth of Hanumān. The scenes are of the death of the grief-stricken Daśaratha; of Bharata's righteous indignation in Ayodhyā; and of his pilgrimage in quest of Rāma and his return with Rāma's sandals. Then the story of the birth of Hanumān—how he tries to pluck the red sun mistaking it for his 'kinbon' fruit; how he is struck down by Inda's thunderbolt; how by Inda he is blessed with the boon of immortality; then how he becomes an ordinary *Vānara* as a result of the curse of the hermits; and then how the hermits, at the request of Zambuman (Jāmbavān), prophesy that Hanumān would regain his might when he meets Rāma on the eve of Rāma's march to Laṅkā.

The palm-leaf MS has altogether about 80 MSS pages, out of which 40 are devoted to Bāla and Ayodhyā Kāṇḍas in 6 chapters in *Rāma Vatthu*.

The *Rāma Vatthu* takes up the remaining 5 Kāṇḍas in a single chapter. The scenes are of the arrival of Rāma, Sītā and Lakkhana at a forest near the ocean after the lapse of 11 years; of the banishment of Thugyeik by Bali in Kitha Kinda; of Gambi with her two sons Kharu (Khara) and

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Tushina (Dūshaṇa) coming to the forest camp of Rāma; of the destrucution of Gambi's sons; of Gambi and Daśagiri at Laṅkā; of Gambi as an enchanted deer; of the abduction of Sītā by Daśagiri; and of the wanderings of Rāma and Lakkhana in search of Sītā.

Then the *Rāma Vatthu* continues the story, e.g., the meeting of Rāma with Thugyeik under Gyo tree; Rāma's alliance with Thugyeik; the destruction of Bali by Rāma; Vānara army and Vānara generals; liberation of Hanumān from the curses of the hermits as a result of gentle stroking on his back by Rāma; Hanumān's leap; Hanumān in Daśagiri's palace in search of Sītā; Hanumān in Thawka garden (Ashoka) witnessing Sītā reject Daśagiri; Rāma's signet ring; Hanumān's fight with Indazita (Indrajit); the burning of Laṅkā; Hanumān's second meeting with Sītā; and his return to Rāma with the seven hairs of Sītā.

Then the *Rāma Vatthu* continues, e.g. the constructing of the cause-way across the strait by Vānaras led by Hanumān; Hanumān's grabbing of the giant crab Gandham; the march of Vānara army to Laṅkā; Aungut (Aṅgada) as an envoy; banishment of Bibhizana (Vibhīṣaṇa) and his friendship with Rāma; Rāma's fight with Indazita and Rāma's fall by Indazita's Serpent-dart in the first encounter; restoring of Rāma to life by Suvannapattaroot brought by Hanumān from Gandhamāna mountain; death of Indazita, despite his power of invisibility, hit by the arrow of Lakkhana in the second encounter; Daśagiri's Ritual interrupted by Hanumān; death of Kumba Kanna; Rāma's fight with Daśagiri and Daśagiri's withdrawal having lost his ten Makuṭa crowns in the first encounter; Rāma made unconscious by the Thamohini weapon of Daśagiri but immediately saved by Hanumān; death of Daśagiri hit by the Divine Bow of Rāma; the Fire Ordeal, Bibhizana's installation on the throne in Laṅkā; demobilisation of Vānara army, except Hanumān who stays with Rāma; and the jubilant Return, and the Coronation in Ayodhyā.

Then the *Rāma Vatthu* narrates the story of Uttara Kāṇḍa. It narrates, e.g. Sītā's drawing of Daśagiri's portrait; Sītā's strong desire for the food from Vālamīgi's hermitage; washerman's doubt about Sītā's fidelity; banishment of Sītā; the birth of Lona and Kusha at Vālamīgi's hermitage; Rāma's Ashvameda Yagna; the capture of the Horse and the fight between Lakkhana and Lona; the fight between Lakkhana and Kusha; the fight between Rāma and his two sons; lament of Sītā; misunderstanding cleared and the restoration of the dead to life on the battle-field by the holy water of Vālamīgi; and the return to Ayodhyā of Rāma, Sītā, their two sons and Lakkhana.

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APPENDIX II

Some examples of Musical Directions with the beginning bars of the music in staff-notation.

(1) *Chat* (Yodāya)—Stealthy movement. Hanumān in search of Sītā in Daśagiri's stronghold.

(2) and (3) *Lokanat* (Burmese)—March of Rāma's allies.

(4) *Nat-chin* (Bur.)—The coming and going of *devas*.

(5) *Natchin A-Yaing* (Bur.)—Revelry, Commotion, flight.

(6) *Tha-gwin* (Bur.)—Solemnity, Grandeur.

(7) *Le-than* (Bur.)—Wind, Storm.

(8) *Moh-than* (Bur.)—Rain-god enters. Rain of flowers.

(9) and (10) *Tya-bwai* (Bur.)—Recitative in song.

(11) *Samo* (Yod.)—Advance of Mahirāvaṇa ogre.

(12) *Phyin-gya* (Yod.)—Returning Kuśa and Bala.

(13) and (15) *Chut-chan* (Yod.)—Rāma in despondency,—Rāma and Lakkhana in sorrow.

(14) *Eik-Chin* (Bur.)—Rāma and Lakkhana in repose.

(16) *Phyin-Phyat-Phyat* (Yod.)—Ogress attendant approaches Sītā.

(17) *A-yaing* (Bur.)—Revelry, commotion, flight.

(*Note*—The numbers correspond to the numbers on the musical examples in staff-notation).

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RE-CREATIONS OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN TAMIL and HINDI

By **S. SHANKAR RAJU NAIDU**

"Probably no work of world literature, secular in its origin" states A.A. Macdonell in the 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics', "has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of a people as the *Rāmāyaṇa*." In the world of Epics, *Rāmāyaṇa* occupies an outstanding position because great men of letters since the pre-Christian era have lavished upon this story their peculiar poetic genius and have felt free to adapt its theme and content to their own cultural patterns and modes of creation. It is surprising to observe that no other epic in the world literature including Homer's *Iliad* and *Oddessy* of the 7th century B.C., Virgil's *Punic War*, the German epic 'Beowulf', Alonso's Spanish Epic 'Arncana', Milton's 'Paradise Lost' and its sequel 'Paradise Regained', and several other such works, has ever had later versions deviating from the original one in the same or different languages. The pride of place goes only to the *Rāmāyaṇa* which re-incarnated in practically all the languages of India in both the classical and folk-forms, running parallel to the indigenous cultural patterns of the people among whom the authors lived and breathed.

Ādi Kavi Vālmīki gave us that reservoir, the *Ādikāvya Rāmāyaṇa*, which has helped the great poets and philosophers of the different parts of India and the South-East Asia to infuse into it their own superb aspirations and fertile imagination. Though there should have been several forms of this story earlier than Vālmīki, it was this great sage-poet who gave to this epic a well-knit plot with all the great requisites of a classic. India being truly innovative in the fields of religion, philosophy and literature too, the later authors boldly took great liberties with the architectonics of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thus we see several great works on *Rāmāyaṇa* itself in various forms in all the developed, developing and undeveloped languages of India and abroad. We can clearly observe that it is only the *Rāmāyaṇa* that has uniformly attracted the attention of all the people of India,

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the literate and illiterate, the rich and the poor. The magical achievement of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been to link the head and the heart of the Indians right from time immemorial.

It is a well-known fact that *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* is the earliest available Indian Epic in Sanskrit dating from before the 3rd century B.C. at the latest. Since then recreations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been effected in large and small forms in the classical and folk styles in all the languages of India. A close study of all the later works would convince us that the most outstanding are the re-creations in Tamil and Hindi, viz., the *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* in Tamil and the *Rāmacaritamānas* in Avadhi Hindi. While assessing the place of the Tamil *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* in world literature, V.V.S. Iyer who was a scholar in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, English, French and Tamil states : "In the *Rāmāyaṇam* of Kamban, the world possesses an epic which can challenge comparison not merely with the *Iliad* and the *Aenied*, the *Paradise Lost* and the *Mahābhārata* but with its original itself, namely, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. It is an opinion that has grown slowly with years and after deep and careful study."[1]

V.S. Smith considers Tulasīdāsa, the author of the *Rāmacaritamānas*, to be "the greatest man of his age in India." Dr. Ram Avadh Dwivedi in his learned work 'Hindu literature' has acclaimed it in the following words—"It is often said that no decent English household is without a copy of Shakespear's work and the *Bible*. But the *Rāmacaritamānas* of Tulasīdāsa, for the teeming millions of North India, takes the place of *Bible* and Shakespeare combined."[2]

Though the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been sung of in the earliest of Sangam Tamil literature dating back to pre-Christian era in *Eṭṭuttohai* (Collection of Eight works), *Pattuppāṭṭu* (Ten Idylls) and *Patineṅkīḷ-Kaṇakku* (Eighteen Minor Moral works), it has been reverentially referred to in the *Aimperumkāppiyaṅgal*, the Five great Epics, particularly *Śilappadikāram* of about the 2nd century A.D. The author Ilaṅgovaḍikal, the younger brother of a Chera king, glorifies Rāma in his monumental epic by saying, "What ear is that ear which has not heard the story of the

1 V.V.S. Iyer, 'Kamba Rāmāyaṇam—A Study', p. 1.
2 Dr. Ram Avadh Dwivedi, 'Hindi Literatue', p. 49.

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Rāmāyaṇa wherein Viṣṇu as Rāma, with his younger brother, went to the forest, his tender feet reddening—the feet which had, as Trivikrama's, measured the three worlds in but two steps, placing the third on the head of King Mahābali—the feet that crossed the ocean and killed Rāvaṇa and his tribe and destroyed the whole of Laṅkā?" Later the Ālwārs (Vaiṣṇava Saints) and Nāyanmārs (Śaiva Saints) also profusely sang the glory of Rāma and Sītā. It was in this context and against this background that Kambar appeared on the scene and re-created the *Rāmāyaṇa* in an Epic form, the like of which we do not find either before him or after. In fact, as Justice S. Maharajan says in his English *Kamban*, "His (Kamban's) great poetry keeps its hold firmly on the centuries, because he gives poetic articulation to those timeless problems which arise at all times and the answers to which will continue to fascinate the spirit of Man till the end of Time."[3] Various story-poems and lyrics in both classical and folk styles are available in Tamil in an abundant measure, but *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* stands supreme.

In Hindi literatue, we may go back as far as 'Paumachariyu' of the 9th century written by Svayambhū Deva in Apabhramśa. Poet Bhūpati of 1285 A.D. is supposed to be the author of the work 'Rām Charit Rāmāyaṇa' but it is not now available. One Bhawatdas is said to have offered 'Bheda Bhāskar Rāmāyaṇa' during the 14th century with a pure philosophical content. Then came Śūrdās, the Milton of Hindi literature, who has given us 'Sūr-Rāmāyaṇa' in Braj Bhāṣā during the early sixteenth century A.D. Tulasīdāsa, the author of the *Rāmacaritamānasa*, appeared with his contemporaries Nabhadas, Keshavdas, Senapati and others. Several works in both classical and folk forms appeared in the languages of the Hindi area before and after Tulasīdāsa, but his *Rāmacaritamānasa* is the most outstanding literary work or religious art in the entire range of Hindi *Rāmāyaṇa* literature. Mention must be made of the *Rāmacandrikā* of Keshavdas, *Kavitā Ratnākar* of Senāpati in Braj Bhāṣā and *Sāket* of our Rashtrakavi Maithilisaran Gupta in Modern Hindi. However, 'Arun Rāmāyaṇa' of poet Arun Rāmavatar is the only *Rāmāyaṇa* in Hindi in its real Khadiboli form which deserves special mention.

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3 Justice S. Maharajan, "Kamban', p. 1.

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Thus we see that the magnum opus in the field of *Rāmāyaṇa* literature in Tamil is *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam*, and in Hindi, the *Rāmacharitamānasa* whose five hundredth anniversary we are celebrating at an international level. It is a well-known fact that *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* is the main source of both the above works of eminence. But it is surprising to observe that there are several identical deviations from the original in both the re-creations. Among such deviations, the picturisation of the pre-matrimonial love of Rāma and Sītā which is not found in *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, is the most striking.

In *Kamban* the incident occurs where, at the very arrival of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with Viśvāmitra to Mithilā, Rāma happens to see by chance Sītā standing in the chamber of her palace. The poet sings—

> "Eye caught Eye, in pairs,
> And each the other devoured;
> Unhinged, utterly exhausted
> The Prince stood looking at the Princess
> And the Princess stood looking at the Prince."[4]

Explaining it still further, Kamban muses—

> "The pair of pointed lances called her glance
> Sank deep in shoulders broad of handsome Ram :
> The lotus eyes of him with sounding anklets
> In turn empierced the bosom of the maid—
> Bewitching like enchantress fair of yore."[5]

The poet explains the culmination and reaches the height of exquisite imagination when he says—

> "The in-drinking look of each
> Formed the love-rope,
> Which clasped and bound the other;
> The heart did the pulling.

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4 Justice S. Maharajan, 'Kavi Chakravarti Kamban', p. 629 (Kamba Rāmāyaṇam 1-10-35).

5 V.V.S. Iyer, 'Kamba Rāmāyaṇam—A Study', (1-10-36).

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And the Lord with the lovely Bow
And the Maid with the lancet look
Changed places,
Entering each other's bosom."[6]

The next scene of inevitable separation is brought forth thus—

"That she could not the handsome one embrace,
The bangled maiden like a statue stood;
Her heart and will and beauty trailing him,
The youth with sage dissolved from sight."[7]

Kamban offers an extraordinary justification for this love at first sight—

"What need for any words whey they
Who parted from their bed on ocean dark united
again?"[8]

and draws the attention of the readers towards Rāma and Sītā being incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu and Goddess Lakṣmī, Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa goes into the royal garden to collect flowers for morning prayers. At that time, Poet Tulasī says, Rāma hears—

"The tinkle of her brcelets and anklets and the bells on her girdle and says to Lakṣmaṇa that it sounds as though Kāmadeva was beating his drum, ambitious of vanquish the world. So saying he turns and looks in that direction and his eyes are fixed on Sītā's face as the partridge gazes on the moon. Motionless stays his beauteous eyes, as though King Nimi (a great grandfather of Soḷar Race who looked at his people as his own eyes and got the boon of ever remaining in the eye-lids of all human beings) has deserted his eye-lids in modest confusion."[9]

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6 Justice S. Maharajan, *Op. cit.*, p. 629 (1-10-27).

7 V.V.S. Iyer, *Op. Cit.*

8 *Ibid.*, 1-10-38.

9 W.D.P. Hill, 'The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma', (Rāmacaritamānasa 1-265-1-2).

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The pure sentiment of love thus sprouted in the hearts of both. Now the poet Tulasīdāsa muses in ecstacy—

> "Her eyes grew tired with gazing on Raghupati's beauty; even her eyelids ceased to move; she was faint with excess of love like the patridge when she looks on the autumn moon. She drew Rāma into her heart by the pathway of her eyes and carefully closed on him the door of her eyelids."[10]

Here again, the justification offered by Tulasīdāsa is just the same as that of Kamban when he says—

> "None knew that the love (of Rāma and Sītā) had been theirs of old,"[11]

thereby suggesting that Rāma and Sītā were incarnations. Thus deification here has reached its zenith.

We can show several such parallels. Another captivating picture is in the scene of the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa. Kamban and Tulasī want to avoid Sītā being physically touched by Rāvaṇa as has been portrayed in *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* and consequently Kambar tells that Rāvaṇa 'uproots the very hut with Sītā in it, up to one mile radius with his pollar-like arms, put it in his aerial vehicle and flies off through the air.'[12] Tulasī adopts, however, a different method. He introduces the element of Māyā Sītā. Just before the arrival of Mārīca in the guise of the golden deer. Rāma tells Sītā with a smile—

> "I am about to play an engaging game as man; do you then make your abode in fire till I have extirpated the demons."[13]

Sītā follows it implicitly by entering into the fire. The poet says—

> "She left her image there of just the same form and modest disposition as her own. Not even Lakṣmaṇa knows the secret of what the Blessed Lord has done."[14]

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[10] W.D.P. Hill, *Op. cit.*

[11] *Ibid.,* (1-262-4). See also 'Kambar Aur Tulasi' Dr. S. Shankar Raju Naidu, University of Madras, Madras-5.

[12] *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam,* 3-8-74.

[13] *Rāmacaritamānasa,* 3-30-1.

[14] *Ibid.,* 3-30-2, 3.

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It may be mentioned here that the real Sītā re-manifested only after the death of Rāvaṇa, during the fire-ordeal.

It is clear that the objectives of Kamban of Tamil and Tulasī of Hindi were more or less similar in so far as they effected departures from the versions of Vālmīki.[15]

Thus it is evident that the pattern of evolution of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in multifarious forms exhibits beyond doubt the unity that underlies the different linguistic and cultural areas of India.

[15] For detailed study, see Dr. S. Shankar Raju Naidu, *Op. cit.*

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN INSCRIPTIONS

By **D. C. SIRCAR**

The earliest Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of India belong to the age of the Maurya emperor Aśoka, i.e. the third century B.C. which is the beginning of the period when the *Rāmāyaṇa* is supposed by scholars to have been composed. Thus M. Winternitz thinks it probable that the original *Rāmāyaṇa,* to which certain parts including Books I and VII were added at a much later date, was composed by Vālmīki on the basis of ancient ballads in the third century B.C. and that the epic had its present extent and contents as early as towards the close of the second century A.D.[1] Unfortunately, the so-called ancient ballads do not exist, and, in any case, could hardly have been earlier than the fourth century B.C. The *Rāmāyaṇa* story, speaking of the Daṇḍaka, the Godāvarī, Kiṣkindhā, Mt. Malaya, the Kāverī, etc., refers to an age when not only the Deccan but even the southernmost areas of India were fairly well-known to North Indians. On the other hand, the Far South of India was unknown to the North when Pāṇini wrote his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* about the fifth century B.C. while Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* (fourth century B.C.) exhibit definite knowledge of that region.[2]

In case the Pali *Daśaratha Jātaka* (No. 461) is regarded as something more than one of the cases of perversion of Brahmanical legends in the hands of the Buddhists and Jains and is supposed to support the existence of ancient ballads on the basis of which the original *Rāmāyaṇa* may have been composed, it may be pointed out that the *Jātaka* story has absolutely nothing to say about the kingdom of Ayodhyā under the Ikṣvāku clan and the journey of Rāma and his party to Laṅkā through the Deccan and the Far South. According to this story, Daśaratha, the King of Vārāṇasī, had from his first chief queen two sons named Rāmapaṇḍita and Lakṣmaṇakumāra and a daughter named Sītādevī. On the death of Daśaratha's first

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1 *History of Indian Literature,* Eng. Trans., Vol. I, pp. 516-17.

2 Cf. R.G. Bhandarkar, *E. Hist. Dec.* in his *Collected Works,* Vol. III. pp. 11ff.; D.R. Bhandarkar, *Lectures on the Ancient History of India,* Calcutta, 1919, pp. 3ff.

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chief queen, the king raised one of his sixteen thousand wives to the position of chief queen, and she gave birth of Bharatakumāra after some time. Daśaratha promised a boon to this lady who at a later date wanted, on its strength, the kingdom for her son. The king then advised his two other sons to live away from the capital for a period of twelve years, and Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, accompanied by Sītā, went to live in the Himālayas. On Daśaratha's death in the ninth year after Rāma's departure, Bharata went to Rāma to get him back; but unwilling to return before the end of the period of twelve years, Rāma advised Bharata to place his slippers made of grass on the throne and rule the kingdom in his name. The purpose of the story is to show how everybody except Rāma was moved at Daśaratha's death, and the unperturbed Rāma consoled the bereaved people. After the remaining three years, Rāma returned to Vārāṇasī and became king, and Sītā was made his chief Queen. It will be seen that the *Daśaratha Jātaka* story does not explain Rāma's journey to the south, and epigraphic records do not throw any light in support of the story.

Inscriptions cannot also reach the absurd antiquity to which Indian tradition assigns the Rāma-story. Rāma is said to have flourished in the Tretā-yuga i.e., many millennia before the beginning of human civilization on the earth.

Indeed it is impossible to think anybody who lived about 300 B.C. could have given an authentic account of persons and events even about 200 years older unless the past was as claer to him as the present. The credulous people of India do not speak of the existence of ancient ballads for helping the creative faculty of the epic narrators, but find an easy explanation in the conception of the *tri-kāla-jña* sages knowing the Past, Present and Future. However, none of these ideas can be proved on the strength of the early inscriptions.

Epigraphic evidence again does not throw any light on the controversy between two groups of early Indian writers on the genealogy of Rāma's family. It is well-known that there is a wide difference about the number of kings in that family between the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the one hand and the Purāṇas and Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* on the other.[3] As regards the second group, Kālidāsa is now usually supposed by scholars to have

[3] Pargiter, *Ancient India Historical Tradition*, pp. 99ff.

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been a contemporary of Candragupta II (376–413 A.D.) and the earlier Purāṇas to have been revised in the fourth century A.D. Any way, the *Rāmāyaṇa* gives only 35 names down to Rāma while the Purāṇas assign about 63 names to that period. Although both the traditions appear to be equally worthless to the serious student of history, the *Rāmāyaṇa* list of kings is usually rejected by the modern writers.[4] We are sometimes presented with 102 names from Vaivasvata Manu, father of Ikṣvāku, to Sumitra after whom the Śrāvastī kingdom of the family is supposed to have become a part of the Nanda empire of Magadha in the fourth century B.C.[5] There is yet another point on which the inscriptions do not throw any light. It is the question whether in the primitive condition of travel described in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* a party of three persons including a lady could really reach Śrī Laṅkā (Ceylon) from the Faizabad region of U.P. and come back to the place alive.

It is difficult to accept the traditional journey of Rāma's party as a historical event.

The inscriptions likewise have nothing to say whether Rāvaṇa should be regarded as a Brāhmaṇa because his father is represented as one belonging to that *Varṇa* or whether we should call him a Non-Āryan since his mother is stated to have been a Rākṣasī obviously assignable to the said community.

However, inscriptions can be utilised in tracing the increasing popularity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the life of the Indians of old. Epigraphic records of the third and second centuries B.C., which are written in a matter-of-fact style, do not offer such evidence of the popularity of the epic; but certain names famous in the epic traditions are noticed in the early records. Thus the Nāgārjuni hill (Gayā District, Bihar) cave inscriptions[6] of the last quarter of the third century B.C. mention the Maurya King Daśaratha, a name so well-known to the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition. The Rāmāyaṇic names are common in the later records.

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[4] *Ibid.,* p. 91.

[5] V. Pathak, *History of Kosala,* pp. 84-114.

[6] See Sircar, *Select Inscriptions,* Vol. I, 1965, pp. 77-78. For the name of Rāma in early epigraphic records, *cf.* Luder's *List of Inscriptions,* Nos. 125-i, 979.

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The tendency to compare the rulers mentioned in inscriptions with epic heroes became gradually popular with the development of the *kāvya* style and its introduction in epigraphic records, and this may also be an indication of the increase in the popularity of the epics. The earliest lengthy description of the activities of a royal personage is found in the Nānāghāṭ (Mahārāshṭra) inscription of the Sātavāhana queen Nayanikā (Nagannikā or Nāga) of the Deccan, which is written in Prākrit prose and belongs to the close of the first century B.C.[7]: but the traces of artificiality in this record are faint and undeveloped, the style being still simple and the abundance of long compound expressions and lengthy sentences being as yet not very prominent. The Hāthigumphā inscription[8] of the Jain king Khāravela of Kaliṅga in the coastal areas of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, which is also in Prākrit prose and is assigned to the same age, is the earliest epigraph exhibiting a somewhat developed *kāvya* style, even though the *ojo-guṇa* (abundance of long compound expressions), regarded as the very life of a prose *kāvya,* is not so very pronounced in it. Of course the royal sage Vasu, i.e. Uparicaravasu of the epic tradition, is introduced in it; but it is probably as a person from whom Khāravela of the Cedi clan claimed descent and not in the full *kāvya* style.

A more developed *kāvya* style is noticed in the Nasik (Mahārāshṭra) cave inscription[9] of the nineteenth regnal year of the Sātavāhana king, Vāsiṣṭhī-putra Pulumāvi (c. 131-59 A.D.) in which the king's father Gautamī-putra Śātakarṇī (c. 106-31 A.D.), is eulogized. In the description of the said Gautamīputra in this epigraph written in Prākrit prose, we find him compared with the epic heroes in two epithets representing him, in their Sanskrit form, as *Rāma-Keśava-Arjuna-Bhīmasenatulya-parākrama* (an equal of Rāma, Keśava, Arjuna and Bhīmasena in valour) and *Nābhāga-Nahuṣa-Janmejaya-Sagara-Yayāti-Rāma-Ambarīṣa-same-tejas* (an equal of Nābhāga, Nahuṣa, Janamejaya, Sagara, Yayāti, Rāma and Ambarīṣa in strength or splendour). The first of the two epithets speak of Rāma though it is not quite certain whether he is Rāma the son of Daśaratha, or Rāma

7 Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-97.
8 *Ibid.*, pp. 213-21.
9 *Ibid.*, pp. 203-07.

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the son of Jamadagni of the Bhṛgu clan, or Rāma the bearer of the plough and otherwise called Balarāma and Sankarṣaṇa. The last of the three is possible because of the association of Keśava. Rāma of the second passage, mentioned along with Nābhāga, Sagara and Ambarīṣa of the solar dynasty, is apparently none other than the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. Thus the Rāma-tradition seems to have been popular by the second century A.D. when the said epic is supposed to have received its final form. Influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been traced in certain passages in the Junāgarh inscription (150 A.D.) and later epigraphs.

Of course, we have no inscription of the Ikṣvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*; but the Kosala king Prasenjit, who had his capital at Śrāvastī and flourished in the sixth-fifth century B.C. is represented in the bas-reliefs Bharhut with a Prākrit label inscription[10] belonging to the second century B.C. In another Prākrit inscription[11] of the fourteenth regnal year of king Vīrapuruṣadatta who belonged to the Ikṣvāku house of Vijayapurī in what was the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa valley before the creation of the Nāgārjunasāgar lake, and flourished in the third century A.D., one of the Buddha's epithets, in its Sanskrit garb, is—*Ikṣvāku-rāja-pravararṣi-śata-prabhāva-vaṁśa-sambhava*, 'born in the family that produced hundreds of great royal sages such as Ikṣvāku'.

It is only natural to expect many more references to the *Rāmāyaṇa*-tradition in later inscriptions, only some of which may be mentioned here. Thus the Gandhar (Jhalawar District, Rajasthan) inscription[12] (423 A.D.) of the Aulikara ruler Viśvavarman, which is small *kāvya* in Sanskrit verse, the king is described as a standard of comparison even for Rāma and Bhagīratha. In the inscriptions of the Cālukyas of Bādāmī, Pulakesin I, one of whose records is dated in 543 A.D., is described not only as an equal of Manu, Nṛga, Nahuṣa, Yayāti, Dhundhumāra, Ambarīṣa, Dilīpa and Nābhāga, but also as conversant with the laws of Manu, the Purāṇas, the *Rāmāyaṇa*,

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10 Lüders, *op. cit.*, No. 751.

11 Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 233, No. 101.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 400, verse 5.

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The *Bhārata* (i.e., *Mahābhārata*) and other *Itihāsas* or legends.[13] Similar references to the influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are traced in the inscriptions of South-East Asia from about the same age.

The Purāṇic stanza giving a list of the ten Avatāras of Viṣṇu, including the three Rāmas, one of whom is the son of Daśaratha, is found in an inscription which comes from Māmallapuram in Tamilnāḍu and belongs to the eighth century A.D.[14] The Hansi (Hissar District, Haryana) stone inscription[15] (1168 A.D.) describes a feudatory of Cāhamāna Pṛthvīrāja II as Hanumat and the king himself as Rāma. The Piplianagar (Ujjain District, Madhya Pradesh) plates[16] (1211 A.D.) of Paramāra Arjunavarman begins with four stanzas in praise of the Moon-god, Paraśurāma (*i.e.* Rāma, the son of Jamadagni), Rāma (apparently the son of Daśaratha) and Yudhiṣṭhira. The number of similar references can be multiplied. It should be remembered that the available epigraphic records are more in number in comparatively later times than in the earlier ages.

There is one *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition on which epigraphic records throw very welcome light. This is about the location of Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā. Although the *Rāmāyaṇa* quite clearly places Rāvaṇa's abode in an island in the ocean to the south of Mt. Mahendra (i.e., Eastern Ghats including the Mahendragiri in the Tirunelveli District, Tamilnadu) and Mt. Malaya (the Southern spurs of the Western Ghats including the Travancore hills) apparently in what is now called Śrī Laṅkā (former Ceylon) far beyond the Godāvarī and the Kāverī, a number of modern writers exercise their imagination too liberally and locate Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā elsewhere within India, often on the

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[13] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 39; *The Classical Age*, ed. Majumdar, p. 231. As regards the meaning of the word *itihāsa*, note that even a mythological tale relating to a dialogue between the king and the preceptor of the gods, viz., Śakra (Indra) and Bṛhaspati, is represented as an old *Itihāsa* in the following Stanza of the *Mahābhārata* (XII. 84.1) : *Ath=āpy=udāharant=imam=itihāsam purātanam=Bṛhaspateś=ca samvādam Śakrasya ca Yudhiṣṭhira.*

[14] *Mem. Arch. Surv. Ind.*, No. 27, p. 5. The verse is—*Matsyaḥ Kūrmo Varāhaś=ca Narasimho='tha Vāmanaḥ/Rāma Rāmaś=ca Rāma's=ca Buddhaḥ Kalkīti-te daśa/* There are lists of the Avatāras also in later epigraphs. For one such from Ajmer, see *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 178ff.

[15] *Ind. Ant.*, 1912, pp. 17-19.

[16] *JASB.*, Vol. V, 1836, pp. 377-82.

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Amarkantak hills in the Bilaspur District, Madhya Pradesh.[17] They do not appear to be conscious of the fact that the Mahendra and Malaya ranges are mentioned in the *Harṣacarita* (seventh century A.D.) as touching each other obviously at the southernmost point of India[18], and that the *Rāmāyaṇa* was understood by all ancient Indian works such as Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* (fourth-fifth century), Pravarasena's *Setubandha* or *Rāvaṇavadha* (fifth century), the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* or *Rāvaṇavadha* (seventh century), Bhavabhūti's *Mahāvīracarita* and *Uttararāmacarita* (eighth century) etc., to locate Laṅkā in the present Śrī Laṅkā (Ceylon). The said modern authors are also not quite conscious about the clear evidence of inscriptions of this point and would invite us to accept twentieth century specularions in respect of a quite clear early Indian tradition.

It is well known that the Indians had the conception of a *Cakravarti-Kṣetra*, i.e., the sphere of influence of an Indian imperial ruler, covering the whole of the Indian sub-continent, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*[19] describing it as bounded in the north by the Himavat and in the south by the Ocean (i.e., the Southern or Indian Ocean), and Rājaśekhara's *Kāvya-mīmāmsā*[20] giving its northern and southern boundaries respectively as Bindusaras, which is located in the Himālayas, and Kumaripura or Cape Comorin in the present Tamilnadu State. Now this *Cakravartti-kṣetra* is often reflected in the conventional description of kings in both literary and epigraphic records, and its limits are usually mentioned as follows : (1) North—Himālaya, Bindusaras, Gandhamādana, Kailāsa, Kedāra, the mythical Sumeru mountain, Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa, the Vamkṣu or Oxus and Bahlika; (2) South—Indian ocean, Cape Comorin, Mahendragiri, the Setu, Suvela, Siṁhala-dvipa and the Malaya mountain; (3) East—Vanga, the Lauhitya (Brahmaputrā), the mythical Eastern or Sunrise mountain, the Eastern Country and Gaṅgāsāgara-sangama; and (4) West—the seven mouths of the Sindhu (Indus), the

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[17] See *Rāmāyaṇa*, Cf. Ed., Uttara-kāṇḍa, Introduction, p. 31ff.

[18] *Malaya-lagna=eva Mahendrah*, (N.S. Press ed., p. 214; *cf.* transl. Cowell and Thomas, p. 211).

[19] IX. 1.

[20] G.O.S. ed., p. 92.

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Western or Arabian Sea, the mythical Mandara or the Western or Sun-set mountain, Maru or the Rajputana Desert and Pārasīka (Persia or Iran).[21] We find that, besides the Indian Ocean and Cape Comorin, Rāma's bridge (*i.e.*, Adam's bridge extending from Rāmeśvaram or Setubandha-Rāmeśvara), Mt. Mahendra (i.e., Mahendragiri in the Tirunelveli District), Mt. Malaya, Mt. Suvela which was a part of the Trikūṭa range and on which the city of Laṅkā was situated, and Siṁhala-dvīpa are located about the southern end of the Indian sub-continent. Among these, the most frequently mentioned is Rāma's *Setu* or bridge which is placed at the southern end of the Indian imperial ruler's sphere of influence in both literary and epigraphic records, *e.g.*, in Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* (seventh century), in the Pāla inscriptions describing Devapāla (ninth century), in a Somavamśī inscription describing king Dharmaratha (beginning of the eleventh century), Vijñāneśvara's *Mitākṣara* describing Cālukya Vikramāditya VI (eleventh-twelfth century), in the Vijayanagara inscriptions describing Viranarasimha, and Kṛṣṇadevarāya (both ruling in the early part of the sixteenth century), etc.

Bāṇa's Kādambarī[22] has the following passage in king Tārāpīḍa's description, in which the boundaries are given as Mt. Udaya (Sun-rise) in the east, Setubandha in the south, Mt. Mandara in the west and Mt. Gandhamādana in the north—*ā śailād = Udaya - nāmnaḥ, kapi - bala - vulupta - virala - lavalī - latā - phalād - = udadhi - vinirgata - jaladevatābhivandyamāna - Rāghava - pādād = acala - pāta - dalita - sankhakula - śakala-tārakita - śilātalān = Nala -karatal-ākalita - śaila - sahasra - sambhūtād = ā Setu - bandhād = accha - nirjhara - jala - dhauta - tāraka - sārthād = amṛta - manthan - odya - ta - Vaikuṇṭha - keyūra - patra - makara - koṭi - karṣaṇa - masṛṇita - grāvṇaḥ - sur -āsura - helā - valayita - Vāsuki - samākarṣaṇa - prārambha - calita - caraṇa - bhara - dalita - nitambād = amṛta - sīkara - sānor = ā Mandar - ācalān = Nara - Nārāyaṇa - caraṇa - mudrāṅkita - Badarikāśrama - ramaṇīyāt Kubera - pura - sundarī - bhūṣaṇarava - mukhara - śikharāt Saptaṛṣi - sandhy - opāsanā - pūta - prasravaṇ - āmbhaso Vṛkodar — oddalita - saugandhika - khaṇḍa - sugandhi - mekhalād = Gandhamādanāt.*

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[21] Sircar, *Stud. Geog. Anc. Me. Ind.*, 1971, p. 13.
[22] Ed. Siddhantavagisa, Calcutta, pp. 194-95.

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The stanza in Devapāla's description giving the boundaries as the source of the Gaṅgā (Himālaya) in the north, the bridge made by Daśāsya's enemy (i.e. Rāma) in the south, the abode of Varuṇa (i.e. the Western or Arabian Sea) in the West and the abode of Lakṣmī (i.e. the Eastern Sea or Bay of Bengal) in the east.

Ā Gaṅg - āgama - mahitāt = sapatna - śūnyam = ā setoḥ prathita - Daśāsya - ketu - kīrteḥ/urvīm = ā Varuṇa - niketanāc = ca sindhor = ā Lakṣmī - kulabhavanāc = ca yo bubhoja[23]

The Somavamśī inscription mentions the boundaries in the following stanza as the forest near the bridge (*i.e.* Rāma's bridge) in the south, the Himavat in the north, the shore of the Eastern Ocean (Bay of Bengal) in the east and the Western mountain (i.e. the mythical Sun-set mountain) in the west.

Setu - prānta - van - āntare Himavataḥ paryanta - bhū - sīmani Prāg - ambhodhi - taṭ - āvanīṣu kaṭake pūrv - etara - kṣmābhṛtaḥ/vaśy = otkampad - arāti - rāja - yuvatī - niḥśvāsa - jhañjhānilair = vyāsaṅga - svanad - antarāla - mukharair = gītam yaśah kīcakaiḥ[24] ||

Vijñāneśvara gives the limits in the following stanza as the bridge of the ornament of Raghu's family (i.e. Rāma) in south, the king of the mountain (Himālaya) in the north, the Western Ocean in the west and the Eastern Ocean in the east :

Ā setoḥ kīrti - rāśeh Raghu - kulạ - tilakasya = ā ca Śailādhirājād =

ā ca pratyak - payodheś = caṭula - timi - kul - ottuṅga - ringat - taraṅgāt /

ā ca Prācaḥ samudrān = pata - nṛpati - śiro - ratna - bhā - bhāsur - āmghrih

pāyād = ā - candra - tāram jagad = idam = akhilam Vikramādiytadevaḥ[25]

The following two stanzas of the Vijayanagara inscriptions give the boundaries as (1) the bridge (*i.e.* Rāma's bridge) in the

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23 Maitreya, *Gauḍalekhamālā*, p. 38.

24 *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XXII, 1946, p. 301.

25 See Colophon, verse 6.

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south, Mt. Sumeru in the north, the mythical Sun-rise mountain in the east and the Western mountain the mythical Sun-set mountain) in the west, and (2) the Eastern mountain the mythical Sun-rise mountain) in the east, the mythical Sun-set mountain in the west, Himālaya in the north and the bridge (i.e. Rāma's bridge) in the south—

Ā setor = ā sumeror = avanisura - nutaḥ svairm = a c = O day - ādrer

ā pāścāty - ācal - out - ad = akhila - hṛdayam = āvarjya rājyam śasāsa[26]

Ā pūry - ādrer = ath = Aṣṭa - kṣitidhara - kaṭakād = ā ca Himācalānatād =

a setor = arthi - sārtha - śriyam = iha saphalīkṛtya kirtyā samiddhah[27] |

Mt. Mahendra is placed at the southern limit with the Lauhitya (Brahmaputrā) in the east, the Tuhinaśikharin (Himālayas) in the north and the Western Ocean (Arabian Sea) in the west in the following stanza in the Mandasor inscription describing the sphere of influence of the Aulikara king Yaśodharman who flourished in the second quarter of the sixth century :

Ā Lauhity - opakaṇṭhā = tala - vana - gahan - opatyakād = ā Mahendrād =

ā Gaṅgā - ślisṭa - sānos = Tuhinaśikhariṇah Paścimād = ā payodheḥ /

sāmantair = yasya bāhu - draviṇa - hṛta - madaiḥ pādayor = ānamadbhiḥ =

cūḍā - ratn - āṁśu - rāji - vyatikara - savalā - bhūmi - bhāgaḥ kriyante[28] ||

Mt. Malaya is mentioned as the southern boundary (1) with the Eastern country in the east, the Maru or the Rājpūtāna Desert in the West and the Prāleyādri (Himālaya) in the north in a verse used in the Pāla inscriptions describing a few kings including Vigrahapāla II (tenth century) as well as (2) with Mt. Kailāsa in the north, the mythical Sun-set mountain in the West

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26 *Mys. Arch. Surv. An. Rep.*, 1941, pp. 185-86.
27 *Mys. Arch. Surv. An. Rep.*, 1941, p. 187.
28 Sircar, *Select Inscriptions, op. cit.*, p. 419.

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and the mythical Sun-rise mountain in the east in the description of king Bhoja (eleventh century) in the Paramāra epigraphs :

(1) *Deśe Prāci pracura - payasi svaccham = āpīya toyam svairam bhrāntvā tad - anu Malay - opatyakā - candaneṣu/kṛtvā sāndrair = Maruṣu Jaḍaṭām śīkarairabhra - tulyaḥ Prāleyādreḥ kaṭakam = abhajan = yasya senā - gajendrāḥ.*[29]

(2) *Ā Kailāsān Malaya - girito 'stodayādri - dvayād = ā bhuktā pṛthvī Pṛthu - narapates = tulya - rūpeṇa yena/ unmūly = orvī - bhara - guru - gaṇā lilayā cāpa - yaṣṭyā kṣiptā dikṣu kṣitir = api param prītim = āpāditā ca.*[30]

The *Harṣacarita* speaks of Mt. Suvela, where the calamity of Rāma's devastation of Laṅkā was engraved by axes hewing down the side of Mt. Trikūṭa, as the southern boundary with the mythical Sun-rise mountain in the east, the mythical Sun-set mountain in the west and the Gandhamādana in the north in the following passage—

ā ravi - ratha - cakra - cītkāra - cakita - caraṇa - mithuna mukta - sānor = Uday - ācalād = ā Trikūṭa - kaṭaka - kuṭṭāka - ṭaṅka - likhita - Kākutstha - Laṅkā - luṇṭhana - vyatikarāt = Suvelād = ā Vāruṇī - mala - skhalita - Varuṇa - varanārī - nūpura - ravamukhara - kuhara - kukṣer = Asta - girer = ā Guhyaka - gehinī - parimala - sugandhi - gandha - pāṣāṇa - vāsita - guhā-gṛhāc - ca Gandhamādanāt.[31]

Siṁhala-dvīpa or the island of Siṁhala is mentioned as the southern limit together with the Eastern sea in the east, the Western Sea in the West and the Himālaya in the north in the following verse of the Karhad plates of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch Kṛṣṇa III :

Anamann = ā Pūrv - āpara - Jalanidhi - Himaśaila Siṁhala-dvīpāt/
yam janak - ajñā - vaśam = api maṇḍalinas = caṇḍa - daṇḍa - bhayāt.[32]

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[29] Maitreya, *op. cit.*, pp. 95

[30] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 235.

[31] N.S. Press, ed., p. 194; cf. Cowell and Thomas, trans., p. 187.

[32] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 284-85

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In this connection it may be noticed that the Bodhgayā inscription[33] (588-89 A.D.) of the Singhalese Buddhist monk named Mohanaman speaks of the fact that he was born in Laṅkādvīpa (island of Laṅkā) which is no doubt identical with Siṁhala-dvīpa. The same inscription mentions the Laṅkācala or the Laṅkā mountains apparently referring to the mountain ranges of Śrī Laṅkā (Ceylon).[34]

The location of the bridge built by Rāma in the Far South is also indicated by Candella Dhanga's inscriptions[35] (1002 A.D.) from Khajuraho. It describes Vijaya, who was the great-grand-father of Dhanga and flourished in the ninth century, as follows : Desirous of conquering the southern region, the king emulated Rāma in bringing the ocean to the wretched state of captivity, i.e., Candella Vijaya built a bridge (probably of boats) between India and Śrī Laṅkā as Rāma had built a bridge of stone before.

Thus the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as understood by the Indians of old, located Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā in the island called Laṅkā or Siṁhala in modern Śrī Laṅkā (Ceylon). Of course there were other Laṅkās and Siṁhalas in India, and there are many cases of the same name being borne by several places for various reasons[36]; but none of the localities bearing the name Laṅkā or Siṁhala can be identified with the island home of Rāvaṇa as known from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the other early epigraphic and literary records of India.

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[33] *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 276.

[34] Cf. Laṅkāgiri-parvata, which was the mountainous central province of Laṅkā, as known from Singhalese writings (Sircar, *Stud. Geog. Anc. Med. Ind.*, 1971, p. 316, note 3).

[35] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 141-42, Verse 20.

[36] Cf. e.g., Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 110. For the same name borne by different localities within India or in India and outside, see *Ibid.*, pp. 210ff., 297-98, 318ff.

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TEXTUAL THEME OF RĀMĀYAṆA IN JAPAN

By MINORU HARA

I present here a translation of two renditions which apparently derive from the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* as preserved in Medieval Japanese literature, and propose a comparative and analytic study of the Indian original and its renditions in the Far East.

The first is an abridged version of the Rāma-story as given in a collection of popular tales, named the *Hobutsushu* (*Ratna-saṁgraha*?) by Tairano Yasoyori in the twelfth century[1], and the second is a modified story of an episode given in the second book of the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*, that is, Daśaratha's unwitting slaughter of a young ascetic, which foreshadows the tragic death of the king in his later days.

The two Japanese versions here presented are in their main framework undoubtedly derivations of the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*, but they have come to differ in detail from their original in the course of their transmission through India to China, and China to Japan. These Japanese versions are not directly taken from their Indian original, but came through the Chinese *Tripiṭaka*. It would be the task of the philologist to analyse these points of difference, and to explain the factors which are responsible for the alterations in details. But prior to these detailed philological studies, the first step must be taken in giving here an English translation of these Japanese versions with a brief introduction.

I

As has been referred to, the abridged Rāma-story is preserved in Tairano Yasuyori's *Hobutsu hu*. However, its text is not without difficulties, for some Manuscripts do not contain the

[1] Cf. O Tanaka, "Religion as a Transmitter of Literature," *Proceedings of the East-West Cultural Conference in Collaboration with Unesco*, The Rāma-Krishna Mission Institute of Culture (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 3-4. It was Dr. K. Minakata who first, in 1914, called the attention of scholars to the Rāma-story in Japan (*Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 4, pp. 46-51).

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story of Rāma here presented. We can distinguish four main recensions of the text, but despite all the efforts of Japanese scholars in the past, we are still not in a position to present its Critical Edition. However, according to the longer versions, there is no doubt that the story of the unnamed king in the Hobutsushu is a derivation of the Rāma-story. A tentative English translation of the version is as follows.[2]

Once upon a time, when the Tathāgata Śākyamuni was king of a great and famous kingdom, this kingdom was in order, and the people enjoyed peace. At that time there was a kingdom by the name of Kyushi[3], where the people suffered seriously from famine so much that the seeds of the five cereals had dies out, and that they had not heard even the word 'food' for a long time. On this account the streets were full of corpses, and most of the people were starving to death. The people of the country met in council and decided to invade the country of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni in order to take grain from them. The people of the glorious country of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni heard of this, but possessing full confidence in the power, they were willing to fight against the invaders.

The king Tathāgata Śākyamuni heard of the plan of his people, and ordered his ministers not to fight, for warfare necessarily results in killing and death of many. The ministers, however, insisted upon the inevitability of the fighting, for otherwise they themselves might perish under the unjust invasion of the enemy. The king Tathāgata Śākyamuni communicated the matter secretly to the queen, saying that, if he would permit them to fight it would mean the slaughter of many people. He said to her, "I am reluctant to fight against the enemy, for if I permit them to fight it means the slaughter of many people. I wish to retreat in the depths of a mountain and to practise the Buddhist *dharma*. What do you think of this?"

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[2] My translation here is based upon the text edited by K. Yoshida and H. Koizumi in the Classical Library Series (Koten-bunko) No. 258 (Tokyo, 1969).

[3] The word *kyu* generally means a father-in-law, but here it means a maternal uncle (*mātula*). Cf. O Tanaka, *Suika-shu* (Collected works by Prof. Tanaka, *bakula-samgraha*) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 103. Possibly, it could have been a remnent of a twisted memory of Bharata's stay in the court of his maternal uncle, Yudhājit in Rajagraha, as given in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* 2.1 and 2.64.

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The queen answered, "I have lived with you for many years. How would it be possible for me to part with you?"

The king said, "Since you are a lady, the enemy would never kill you even when they invade our country." He advised her repeatedly to stay in the capital. Despite his repeated words, the queen did not comply, and finally accompanied him to the depths of a mountain.

Surprised by the king's sudden retreat to a mountain, the warriors of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni surrendered themselves to the enemy without fighting.

The king, on the other hand, led his simple life with the queen in the mountain, taking fruits from the mountain and gathering green herbs from a swamp. One day a Brahmin ascetic went there, and highly praising the king's determination and simple mode of life, offered his company, and attended upon him. The king was greatly pleased with his offer and lived together with him. One day, however, when the king was absent, going out gathering fruit in the mountain, the Brahmin ascetic disappeared, taking the queen with him. When the king returned back to his hermitage, he noticed her disappearance and determined to set forth in search in the depths of the mountain. He found a huge bird on the road who was about to die, having broken both wings. The bird said to the king, "The Brahmin ascetic who had been your attendant abducted the queen. Seeing this, I determined to fight him until you came back, but the Brahmin ascetic transformed himself into a dragon-king (*nāga-rāja*?), and kicked me vehemently so that both my wings were thus broken." With these words the bird breathed his last. The king was struck with compassion; and buried the bird at the top of the mountain.

The king set out for the south, simply relying upon the bird's word that the offender was a dragon-king. On his way to the south he happened to meet thousands of monkeys in a mountain roaring vehemently. They were pleased to meet the king and communicated him their plan. They said, "The mountain which has been in our possession for a long time has been plundered by a neighbouring king, and in order to recover it we determined to proclaim war against the enemy tomorrow at mid-day. We would like to make you general of our army."

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The king was perplexed, and hesitated to join the battle, but finally accepted their offer. The monkeys gave him a bow and arrows. At the appointed time the battle began and thousands of soldiers attacked them. In accordance with the advice of the monkeys the king drew his bow to its full extent. Being a skillful archer his elbow even touched his back. The enemy fled without sheeting an arrow, seeing his skill in archery. The group of monkeys were much pleased with and obliged to the king for his help, and expressed their wish to be of help in any way. The king communicated his plan to them, saying, "I am going south in search of the palace of the dragon-king who took my queen by trickery." Hearing this the monkeys said, "You saved our lives. We are eternally grateful to you. Let us join you." Thus, thousands of monkeys followed the king, and they reached the southern end of the continent facing the ocean in the south. But they did not find any means of traverse further south.

At this moment the Brahma Sakka was greatly touched at seeing that the king had left his kingdom in the practice of non-killing (*ahiṁsā*), and that the monkeys accompanied him as far as the south shore in their gratitude to him. He transformed himself into a small monkey and mingled with the thousands of monkeys. The small monkey advised his followers as follows, "It is just a waste of time to stay here without means of proceeding. It would be better for each of us take a piece of timber and a handful of herbs, in order to make a bridge, and then to cross the bridge to the island, the mansion of the Dragon. They followed his advice and made a bridge according to his suggestion, and thus they were successful in reaching the mansion of the Dragon. The dragon-king got angry and roared frightfully.

At twilight[4] he discharged a dazzling light. The monkeys were intoxicated by dew and frightened by snow, and finally fell

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[4] The text here is corrupt, and editorial interpretations are also unintelligible. Thus, I present here only a tentative translation. But, if my reading is correct, it may suggest traces of the memory of the demoniac and treacherous attack by Indra upon Vṛtra and Namuci at twilight (*samdhyākāle*), as given in *MBh.* 5-10-29 (*na divā na tathā nis'i* and 9-42-30 (*na rātrau nāpi vāhani*). For similar expressions, cf. also *MBh.* 7.172-77 and P. Hacker, *Prahlāda, Werden and Wandlungen einer Idealgestalt* (Wiesbaden, 1959), pp. 27ff. and 36ff.

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down upon the ground. The small monkey went up to Mt. Himālaya and returned with a branch of the tree called Great Herbs. No sooner had he caressed the fallen intoxicated monkeys with it, than they revived with greater power than before, and attacked the dragons. The king of the dragons was blazing with the light, but was met by the king who was shooting arrows. The dragon-king fell amongst the monkeys when he was struck by an arrow. Seeing this the lesser dragons fled without fighting with the monkeys. The monkeys entered the mansion of the Dragon and rescued the queen, and returned to the mountain with a booty of seven jewels.

At this time the king of the kingdom of Kyu-shi died, and people of many countries, big and small, invited the king secretly, and made him king over the two countries.

It is a wonder (*āścarya*) that monkeys were able to attack the castle of the dragons and were able to kill the king of dragons. It is only possible by means of a prayer with a vow (*praṇidhāna*). Details are given in the canon, *lie-tu-tsi-ching* (Rokudojikkyo, *Six Pāramitā Sūtra*?).

In the above translation of the *Hobutsushu*, we notice several points of similarity with the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa.*

First, the king retreats to the woods with this queen, though not because of banishment by the father Daśaratha, but through his fear of killing people in battle. The motive here is more religious than its Indian original, for it is for the sake of practising *ahiṁsā.*

Second, there is the abduction of the queen by the Brahmin ascetic in disguise, though we have no motif of a golden deer, as in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*, but an account of abduction in the husband's absence. Neither do we have a person corresponding to Lakṣmaṇa here.

Third, the huge bird which lies seriously wounded in the road and which points out the way taken by the abductor corresponds to Jaṭāyus. The abductor was actually Rāvaṇa in disguise, but here he appears as a king of dragons (*nāga-rāja*) instead of the *rākṣasa.*

Fourth, the king's unexpected meeting with a group of monkeys, his assistance in their endeavour to recover their lost

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kingdom, and the agreement of monkeys to help the king in return are the same as the account in the Indian original. This reminds us of the mutual assistance between Rāma and Sugrīva's army.

Fifth, the subsequent story of their reaching the southern end of the continent and their crossing of the ocean is the same as in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa.* But here we notice another motif interposed; Sakka Indra's favour and his transformation into a clever little monkey who suggests the way to construct a bridge.

Sixth, the attack of the monkey-army on the *nāga-bhavana,* and the encounter with the *nāga-rāja* who uses a mystic weapon for the purpose of extirpating the monkey-army, are on the same lines as the Indian original. The latter especially corresponds to Indrajit's attack on Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who felldown upon the earth after being struck with the weapon.

Seventh, the subsequent story of the fetching of a branch of the *mahā-oṣadhi* tree in the Himālaya by the little clever monkey, that is, Indra in disguise, reminds us of Jāmbavat's suggestions to Hanūmat to fetch the four kinds of herbs in the Mt. Auṣadhi given in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa.*

Eighth, the account of the king's arrow killing the *nāga-rāja,* and the account of the recovery of the queen are the same as Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa and his rescue of Sītā, as given in the Indian original.

Ninth, the king's glorious return to his hermitage and people's entreatment to him to become the lord of the two countries make up a happy ending of the Japanese version, whereas the Indian original has, beyond this, the further stories of Rāma's second parting with Sītā, of the Vālmīki's hermitage, the sons of Kuśa and Lava, and so forth.

II

A second textual derivation from the Rāmāyaṇa in Japan is preserved in another collection of tales, named (*Sambo-ekotoba*) (Notes on the pictures of the *tri-ratna*), by Minamotono Tamenori in the tenth century. The book was originally intended to serve as a caption-story for paintings, for the author himself says in the introduction that he made this in order to console an

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unhappy princess through explaining the meanings of some picture-scrolls. Unfortunately, the picture-scroll itself has been lost, and only these caption-stories are preserved for us.

Now, a reader of the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* might be touched by reading the pathetic story given in the second book, chapters 56 and following, where king Daśaratha confesses to his faithful wife Kausalyā that he himself was originally responsible for the tragic death of his own, from separation of his beloved son Rāma. When he was young he was a reputed skilled archer (*śabda-vedhin*), and he once unwittingly killed a young ascetic, who was taking care of his old blind parents in the depths of a mountain. The blind father, out of sorrow for his departed son, cursed the king that the king himself in his old age share the same fate as this poor old man, and with these words the old man breathed his last.

We have the frame of this story in the Pāli Jātaka 540, that is, the *Sāma-Jātaka,* and in the *Śyāmaka Jātaka* found in the *Mahāvastu-avadhāna*[5], although the story in these Buddhist versions differs from that of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in having a happy ending. Here the young ascetic is revived by virtue of the act of truth (*satya-kriyā, satya-vacana*), and the story itself moulded into a didactic and moral story with recommendation for *kṣānti* (perserverance) and with emphasis upon the merit of the son's devoted attendance upon his parents.

These Indian versions moulded into a moralistic story by the Buddhists are translated into Chinese, and from there the story was transplanted into Japan and became quite popular in Mediaeval Japanese literature.[6]

I shall give below a tentative translation of a passage in the *Sambo-ekotoba* derived from this frame-story of the *Rāmāyaṇa.*[7]

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[5] Independently of textual evidence, the story of Sāma, or Śyāmaka is preserved also in carved monuments. Cf. J. Marshall and A. Foucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi,* Vol. 1, p. 225 and vol. 2 (Plate 65, a, 1) and A. Foucher *L art greco-bouddhique du Gandhara,* I, p. 279ff.

[6] Cf. The twenty-four Stories of the devoted son (*nijushi-ko*) in the *Otogisoshi* (Nihon-koten-bungaku-takei 38, pp. 257-258.)

[7] My translation here is based upon the text edited by K. Yoshida and H. Miyata, Classical Library Series 215 (Tokyo, 1965).

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Once upon a time there lived a rich merchant couple in the country of Kaira. As they advanced in age, they lost their eyesight. They had a son, whose name was Semu (or Zenshin). He was versed in the practice of the ten virtues, and served his aged parents faithfully. Though the old couple had for a long time a desire to retreat into the woods with a view of practising the Buddhist *dharma*, they stayed at home, not wanting to part with their only son and with one who was looking after them.

The son, Semu, knowing their intention, said to them, "What prevents you from fulfilling your long cherished desire? Everything in this world is transitory. Nobody knows the time of death. It would be better for you to accomplish your desire as soon as possible. I will accompany you to take personal care of you." The parents were delighted and immediately they proceeded to give all their possession to the poor. The son took his old and blind parents to the depths of a mountain, and settled them there. He built a simple hermitage, and prepared for them a bed of mugwort. He would take water from a waterfall and gather fruits from the mountain. Everyday, early in the morning he would leave home in search of fruits, but would never eat them before his parents. At night he would wake up thrice in order to see if they felt chilly, or whether they slept in warmth. In this way he passed his years attending to his parents, and even birds and beasts were moved to tears by his deep filial affection.

One day the parents asked him for some water. He put on a coat made of deer's hide, and went down to a ravine with a jar in hand. As he was drawing water there, he happened to come across a herd of deer drinking water, and became indistinguishable from them because of the deer-hide he had on. At that very moment the king of Kaira country was out hunting and was around that area. He shot his arrow aiming at the deer, but it pierced the heart of Semu. On falling down upon the ground he cried out, "Who is it that killed three persons with a single arrow? Elephants are killed for their tusk, a rhinoceros is killed for its horn. There is no gain in killing me. For what reason had I to be killed?" On hearing this human voice, the king realized that it was not a deer, but a man he had struck. He approached him in surprise, descending from his horse. The king said, "Who are you? I shot an arrow mistaking you for a deer."

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He replied, "I am one who lives in this mountain taking care of my old parents." The king wept together with others around him. Suddenly a strong wind arose, blowing off branches of trees. All the birds cried in sorrow, and beasts ran roaring vehemently. Daylight dimmed, it thundered and the earth shook. Terrified with these evil portents, the king said breaking into tears, "Alas, I have committed a grievous sin, killing this noble son by mistake. I have incurred grave sin seeking a small pleasure. How could I ever cure your wound?"

He tried to pull off the arrow from the wound, but he could not, for it pierced deep. Semu consoled the king, saying, "It is not your fault. It is due to my former *karma*. Again, I do not feel sorry for myself, but for my parents. They are old and blind. I am afraid they would not live long without my attendance."

This statement made the king more sorry. The king said, "If you die here, I will not return (to my capital). I will remain here in this mountain and serve your parents in your place. Let all deities and dragon-gods hear this. I will never break this pledge[8]."

Semu was delighted immensely with those words and said to the king, "If you would be true to your oath and take the best care of my old parents, I can die in peace."

The king replied, "Let me know quickly where your parents are, before you breathe the last."

Semu said, "Go down this narrow path and you will find a tiny hermitage made of grass. They are there. But please walk slowly and quietly, for otherwise it may surprise their heart already weak and fragile. Consider carefully how to addess them and speak of the matter in advance, for otherwise they may get confused. These are my last words to them—'The span of man's life is short. Now I am about to die, parting with you for ever. Just a single thought disturbs me at this last moment;

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[8] Indian original of this verse is found in *Sāma-Jātaka* Gāthā 10, and *Mahāvastu* (E. Senart ed.) II, pp. 213 and 222, but can even be traced back to the gaṇa of Pāṇini 2-3-36 (*carmaṇi dvīpinam hanti dantayor hanti kuñjaram...*) Cf. J. Charpentier, "Zur Geschichte des Caryapitaka," *WZKM*. 24, p. 397 note 2.

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whom will you rely upon? How will you spend the remaining span of your life without me? But death is the final resort of living beings, and no one can escape this fate. Keeping this in mind, you should not lament. Do not let your mind be disturbed unnecessarily. I only wish that I shall be born as your son in the next life and that we shall never part with each other.' "

With these words he breathed his last. Hearing this, the king and the others burst into tears, crying out loud.

The king walked toward the hermitage as directed. The old blind parents felt uneasy because of these unnatural portents, and then asked him, "who has come?"

The king replied, "I am the king of the country. I came here personally with the intention of showing my respect to you, who, as I heard, have retreated to this mountain in order to practise the Buddhist *dharma*."

On their part they were surprised at this unexpected visit of the king, and said to him, "We are very grateful to you. We have here a special mat which was recently made. Please sit here and rest." They spread the mat.

The king said, "Are you comfortable in your life here?" They replied, "We are content here, having a glorious king and a devoted son. The former rules righteously so that people may enjoy peace, and the harvest is ever plenteous. The latter takes good care of us, gathering fruits from the mountain and fetching water from the ravine. We have nothing to complain of at all, having nothing to suffer from. Please take a bit of fruit here. At this moment my son is down at the ravine fetching water. I hope he will be back soon."

Losing control the king shed tears, and said, "It is painful for me to watch the parents waiting for the return of their son, painful indeed, as if I am torn asunder. For I tell, you, I killed your son unintentionally while I was hunting deer in this mountain. It is because of this sad event that I came here. Now you can rely upon nobody but me. I shall take care of you in place of your son."

On hearing these words of the king, the parents threw themselves and fell, as a huge mountain falling to pieces. The

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king lifted them up, and they addressed him in lamentation: "My son was decent and never insulted me. What wrong has he done to you that you had to kill him? It has been more than twenty years since we settled here, but we have never felt so uneasy in my son's absence as today because of inauspicious signs such as the sudden wind and the terrifying cries of birds. Today, we suspected that there may have been something wrong with our son, and tried in vain to avert the evils from him. But, when did it happen, just now, or sometime ago? Is he dead, or still alive?"

The king imparted the message of the son to his parents word by word, and said, "Your son breathed his last with those words."

On hearing this the parents got confounded more than ever and said, "Our only son is already dead. Why should we rely upon someone else? We would rather die. Please take us to the place where our son lies dead. We would like to die on the same spot as our son."

In deep sorrow the king led them by the hand and went to the spot. The father held the son's feet and the other held his head, and drew out in vain the arrow together. The mother even licked his wound with tongue, and said, "Let the poisonous element enter into my mouth and kill me. Revive my son instead! Since I am old and blind, I would rather die in his place." Thus, the parents cried out loud and in prayer said, "Our son is a devoted son, and pays homage to the three jewels, *Buddha, Dharma* and *Sangha*. If the heaven knew his devotedness in attending to his parents, let this arrow be drawn by itself, its poison disappear, the departed soul come back again, and bring him back to life. On the contrary, if his devotedness is untrue, and my statement improper, let his soul depart and become a deer."

At this moment the throne of Sakka Indra became uncomfortable, and the mansions of the gods shook. Indra saw through all this with his divine eyes from afar. He looked with compassion on the parents in their affection toward their son, and on the son in his devotion to his parents. The gods in heaven including Brahmā, and those on earth, all gathered together and had compassion upon them. Indra, then,

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transformed himself (into a man), and standing in front of the parents said to them : "This son of yours is truly devoted. I will extend my hand of help and revive him by all means." Thus Indra brought divine medicine (*amṛta*), and poured it into the mouth of Semu. Instantly the poison-arrow drew itself and Semu revived. The parents marvelled, looking at their son with their own eyes, their blindness cured. Birds and beasts were delighted, running here and there, and cried joyfully. The wind stopped blowing, thick clouds disappeared, the sun began to shine, and flowers came in full blossom. The king in joyous surprise bowed in front of Indra, the parents and the son, and said, "I will donate all my possessons to the people, and staying here long, I will attend upon you day and night."

Semu said in reply to the king, "If you think that you are much obliged to us, go back quickly to your country and give the people an order that they keep self-control (*śīla*). Desist from hunting. By killing others one feels uneasy in this life and goes to hell in the next life. You have attained this kingship because of the merits you accumulated previously in past lives. So do not commit sins, as your passion goes out of control."

The king repented and said, "Hereafter I will follow your advice." Some of the king's retinue were also surprised, seeing that medicine descending from heaven had revived the son and cured the blindness of the parents. They pledged that they would never break the vow of non-killing (*ahimsā*) as long as they lived.

The king returned to his country and ordered the people as follows, "Those who take care of old blind parents as Semu does should be assisted by other people. On the contrary, those who injure devoted sons will incur heavy punishment." Thus, all over his kingdom people taught each other to act like Semu, keeping the five commandments (*śīla*) and practising the ten virtues (*dharma*); and after death they all were born in heaven, and nobody fell into hell.

The Buddha, concluding the story, said to Ānanda, "Semu in this story is no one but myself. His parents are the king Śuddhodana and because of my devotedness, that I have attained Buddhahood. Everybody has parents. Let everybody take the best possible care of his parents. This is the noble path. One must master this."

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Details are given in the Sūtra of Sèmu, the Bodhisattva, and also in the *lie-tu-tsi-ching* (Rokudojikkyo, the *Six Pāramitā Sūtra*).

The story of the faithful son, Semu, as given in the *Sambo-Ekotoba,* naturally reminds us of an episode given in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* 2.56 ff., where the king Daśaratha relates the cured fate of his last day to his queen Kausalyā. Although the main line of the story here is almost the same as in the Indian original, it differs from the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* on some points.

First, the story here has a happy ending, for the killed son is revered and thus there is no room for the poor old man to curse the king.

Second, we have here a motif of the *satya-kriyā* (or *satya-vacana*) of the mother, which moved Indra in heaven, who out of compassion revived the son.

Third, in the Japanese version the story of a young ascetic came to serve as an illustration of the power of merit which a son may accumulate within himself in the course of attending devotedly upon his parents.[9]

However, these points of difference are accounted for by the Buddhist versions preserved in the Chinese Tripiṭaka (Lie-tu-tsi-ching, Rokudojjikkyo, *Tsa-pao-tsan-ching,* Zohozo-kyo, etc.)[10], which are nothing but the Chinese counterpart of the Pāli *Sāma-jātaka* and the *Śyāmaka-jātaka* in the *Mahāvastu-avadāna.* In these Buddhist versions we have also a happy ending as the result of the *satya-vacana,* although there Indra does not appear at all.

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[9] In the *lie-tu-tsi-ching* (Rokudojikkyo), however, this story of Sāma is an illustrative tale of forbearance (*kṣānti* or *kṣamā*). However, in the *Cariyāpiṭaka* (3.13) and the *Milinda-panha* (V. Trenckener ed, pp. 198-199) it is treated as an illustrative tale of *metta-bhāvanā,* or *metta-pāramita.*

[10] The references to the devoted son, Sāma, in the Chinese Tripiṭaka are as follows, (spelling in Japanese); *Rokudojikkyo* (Taisho, vol. 3, p. 24 *b*), *Bosatsu Senshikyo* (Taisho, vol. 3, p. 436), *Bussetsu Senshikyo* with three different versions (Taisho, vol. 3, pp. 438, 440 and 442), *Zo ozokyo* (Taisho, vol. 4, p. 442), *Zenkenritsubibasha* (Taisho, vol. 24, p. 713), *Daito Saiiki ki* (Taisho, vol. 51, p. 881). References to the names, Sāma or Śyāmaka, are also found in, *Daihoshakukyo* Vol. 80 (Gokoku-bosatsue) (Taisho, vol. 11, p. 461 *c*), *Juju-bibasharon* vol. 5 (Taisho, vol. 26, p. 44), and *Ronyakn, myogishu* vol. 1 (Taisho, vol. 54, p. 1062).

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The similarity between *Rāmāyaṇa* 2.56 ff. and the *Sāma-jātaka* has been pointed out by J. Charpantier and H. Oldenberg[11], and we might conjecture that these Sanskrit and Pāli versions had a common source. The *Rāmāyaṇa* singer used it in the framework of king Daśaratha's tragedy and the Buddhist versions modified it into a moralistic story.

Despite the problems involved in comparative studies of the stories given in the Epic, *Pāli-jātaka* and Buddhist Sanskrit *Avadāna*, we can say that the Japanese version of the Semu-story bears an indirect dependence on the *Rāmāyaṇa*-episode given in 2.56 ff. through the Chinese Tripiṭaka, whose Indian equivalent we have in the *Sāma-jātaka* and the *Śyāmaka-jātaka*.

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[11] Cf. J. Charpentier, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-399; H. Oldenberg, "*Jātaka-studien,*" *Kleine Schriften* Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 1096-1099.

M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1920), Bd. 2, pp. 369-370.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN NEPĀLĪ

By KAMALA SANKRITYAYAN

Place of the Rāmāyaṇa in Āryan Culture

The culture of the Vedic Āryans has been influenced by certain books. The most important of these are the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas. Then come the great epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. These books have influenced the life of the Āryans for the last three thousand years. After the eras of Sanskrit and Prākṛt, the sacred and literary books written in the modern Indo-Āryan languages have been influenced by the stories of the Purāṇas, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Indeed, the two epics have a unique place in Indian culture. Their stories have been interwoven in the whole culture of India. An epic, by its very nature, has an intimate relationship with the life and culture of the country of its origin. It portrays the life of the people, present their ideals and spiritual beliefs. But the place of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* is more important in the cultural fabric than the place of any other epic in any other language. Not only are these two epics esteemed for their literary worth, they have also served as a source of wisdom, of ideals and of spiritual guidance to the Indians for the last three thousand years.

The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has played a great part in bringing about cultural unification. Among the *Rāmāyaṇas* in different Indian languages, we have in Nepālī the *Mero Rāma* (20th century) and Nepālī *Ādarśa Rāghava Mahākāvya* (20th century). There are also many other works based on the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thus, we can understand how this sacred epic and the story of Rāmacandra has affected the way of our thinking and life. We can also understand why our neighbouring Hindu Country, Nepal, has a great affection for the *Rāmāyaṇa*-tradition. We can understand and observe the development of *Rāmāyaṇa*-tradition in Nepālī literature from the ancient period to the modern age.

Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī Prose

We should see first which version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been of the greatest importance to the Nepālī people and their

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culture. We find that the *Ādi Rāmāyaṇa* of Ādikavi Vālmīki and the other spiritual *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* have their reputed places respectively. But comparing the two Rāmāyaṇas, we find that the Nepālī people have given their attention and affection to the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. We know this on seeing that the famous *Rāmāyaṇa* of Ācārya Bhānubhakta is based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. In the pre-Bhānubhakta era, this same Rāmāyaṇa was very popular among the Nepālī people. In Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* we find Rāma presented as a noble person. Vālmīki has treated the hero of his epic as a loving and obedient son of King Daśaratha, a loving husband of Sītā, and he has also explained the weakness of Rāma. He has not depicted Lord Rāma as a Hindu God or deity.

But the theme of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* is completely different. Though the composer of this Rāmāyaṇa has followed the story of the Rāmāyaṇa as written by Vālmīki, the poet has presented the character of Rāma as a celestial being, and depicted him as Lord or God. He is full of compassion, serenity and all the godly virtues. And he has also portrayed Sītā as a goddess. The unsophisticated Nepālī people love the nature of this kind of Rāma and Sītā. They love the purity serenity and the godliness of Rāma. That is why the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* is so famous and popular among the people of Nepal and outside the country as well.

When we go through the history of Nepālī literature we find that the first Rāmāyaṇa was written in Nepālī in 1833 A.D. It was written in Nepālī prose. The full data of this Rāmāyaṇa is not available, but according to the famous Nepālī linguist and litterateur Shri Bālkrishna Pokhrel, this prose Rāmāyaṇa was named the *Rāmāśwamedha*. The writer is anonymous. At present the manuscript of this book *Rāmāśwamedha* is lying with Vīra Pustakālaya in Kathmandu. Here is an excerpt from this volume in English translation :

> "Lord Rāma, who was worshipped by the great sage Vasiṣṭha and other Munis, with his Lady Sītā entered the water of the sacred river Sarayū, whose water is very beneficial and sacred and pure. After them the other kings and the people who were purified by the dust of Rāma's

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feet also entered the water of the sacred river Sarayū which was worshipped by the people. After drinking the pure water of the river the people who had very red eyes (*i.e.* were sad) did get happiness."[1]

Until the late 19th century there was no printing press in Nepal. Much of the earlier literature, including the different Nepālī Rāmāyaṇas, is available to us only in the form of manuscripts.

Rāmāyaṇa Laṅkā Kāṇḍa : This is another manuscript written in Nepālī prose by Pandit Padam Sharma in the month of Śrāvaṇa 1896 Vikrami (*i.e.* August 1939 A.D.). According to Shri Balkrishna Pokhrel[2] the author was not a good writer. He was only literate, and his main work was to make duplicate copies of the different Sanskrit texts by hand. He lived among religious people and it was from the stimulus of their company that he composed the *Rāmāyaṇa Laṅkā Kāṇḍa*. The manuscript is now the property of the Vīra Pustakālaya, Kathmandu.

A specimen paragraph of this book is given below :

"Śhrī Gaṇeśāya Namah (Salutations to Śrī Gaṇeśa), Lord Śiva said—O Pārvatī, after that Śrī Rāmacandra and Hanumān went in search of Sītā and when Hanumān found Sītā, he came back to Śrī Rāma and narrated the plight of Sītā. Knowing and hearing about Sītā, Śrī Rāma was very pleased and he addressed his friend Sugrīva thus—'O my friend Sugrīva, the courageous deed of Hanumān is very difficult even for gods. Then how canmortal creatures have the courage for this kind of heroic deed? Not only is it impossible for them to perform, they cannot even think about it. Such is the deed that Hanumān has performed.' "

At the end of the book, the author writes—"O Pārvatī, if one were unable to listen to the whole *Rāmāyaṇa Laṅkā Kāṇḍa* and were to listen only to half the story of the coronation of Śrī Rāma, he would get the credit of hearing the whole Rāmāyaṇa. Those who will listen to the whole of the Rāmāyaṇa will get the same glory they would get in giving away crores and crores of cows. They will also get the credit of performing crores of *Aśwamedha yajñas*. They will never face any difficulty or crisis. And again, one who has been able to listen to the whole

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[1] Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa (Gita Press)

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Rāmāyaṇa need have no fear of thieves, *agni* (fire), the king, and ghosts, devils and witches. By the influence of this story, all one's unlucky stars will be propitiated. There are many types of diseases in this world but people who are well-versed in the Rāmāyaṇa need not fear them. The enemies of such people will be vanquished. Such a person will, after his death, be placed near the sacred feet of Lord Rāma. He will not have to be born again in his mother's womb. He will be freed from the cycle of birth and death in the world and will attain '*mokṣa*'. O Pārvatī, there is not deception. I have told you all the truth."

The author has characterised Rāma as God and Sītā as Goddess. Therefore we realise that this *Rāmāyaṇa Laṅkā Kāṇḍa* is based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. We can thus estimate the popularity of the later Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī culture and life. The author has presented the narrative in the form of a conversation between Lord Śiva and Goddess Pārvatī. We have no idea whether Pandit Sharma wrote a complete Rāmāyaṇa of seven kāṇḍas or whether he only wrote the Laṅkā Kāṇḍa.

The Rāmāyaṇa of Sundarananda Banrah

The reign of Mahārājā Ranabahadur Shah (1778-1800 A.D.) was the time when the Nepālī language became rich in literature. Books of verse began to be written and translations of Sanskrit texts were undertaken. Poet Shakti Vallabh Aryal wrote his famous book 'Kasya Kadamba'. Sundarananda wrote his famous 'Rāmāyaṇa' in Nepālī prose, and 'Triratna Saundarya Gāthā'. Mahārānī Lalit Tripur Sundari translated 'Rājdharma' from the original Sanskrit. Pandit Yadunāth Pokhrel composed his 'Stuti Padya', a book of poems. Another famous writer Pandit Daiwagnya Keshari Āryal wrote the book named 'Gorakṣa Yog'. Many other books were also written.

In this rich age of Nepālī literature, the author of the complete Rāmāyaṇa in prose, with the whole seven kāṇḍas, appeared in the firmament of Nepālī literature. His name was Sundarananda Banrah. Though his mother-tongue was Newārī he was well-versed in the Nepālī language also.

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Shri Sundarananda Banrah was born in Patan (Lalitpur) near Kathmandu. There was a Mahāvihāra named Okubahal (Rudra Mahāvihāra), where he was a priest. When he was born, and who his parents were, are still subjects of research. Though he was not a very profound scholar of Sanskrit, he was well conversant with some religious texts in Sanskrit which were used in religious rites as he was a *Purohit* (Priest). He wrote a book entitled 'Triratna Saundarya' (Beauty of three gems) in Sanskrit and later he himself translated it into Nepālī. Besides this, he translated the whole *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* into Nepālī prose. The exact time of the translation, according to Shri Balkrishna Pokhrel[3] is around the Samvat 1896 (i.e. 1839 A.D.). This Rāmāyaṇa is big in its size, it is surprising to think that it could be written during that era. The language of this volume is not very polished, as the author was from the Newar community and the Newari language is absolutely different from Nepālī. However, it is an achievement for the author to have produced such a big volume like his Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī.

We can easily imagine by the following analysis how big is the Rāmāyaṇa of Sundarananda Banrah. There are in all seven Kāṇḍas (cantos) in this Rāmāyaṇa. Here is a list of how many sargas (chapters) there are in each Kāṇḍa—

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4 Preface of the Rāmāyaṇa of Sundarananda, p. 8.

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When we study the Rāmāyaṇa of Sundarananda we find that the author knowingly or unknowingly, did not make a literal translation of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* but that he has collected two or three versions and has written his Rāmāyaṇa based on the sargas of the different Rāmāyaṇas. Thus he has created a very new Rāmāyaṇa in his own style. Following this method, he has written the first five Kāṇḍas of his Rāmāyaṇa according to the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, and the last two Kāṇḍas i.e., Laṅkākāṇḍa and Uttarakāṇḍa have been written according to the *Ādi Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. Although he has written the first five Kāṇḍas of his Rāmāyaṇa based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* some originality has crept in narrting the stories and the explanations in it. Thus we realise that his Rāmāyaṇa is not a literal translation of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, and that is why we can say that his Rāmāyaṇa is the original one in Nepālī literature.

To find examples of the writer's originality, let us now consider the Sundarakāṇḍa of this Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa. There are incidents which have been given a humorous treatment not found in the classical Rāmāyaṇas. One example is the episode of the burning tail of Hanumān in this Rāmāyaṇa. Most probably, Sundarananda had taken it from the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa*. We have just mentioned here the Rāmāyaṇa of Tulasīdāsa, because we find that Sundarananda has picked up incidents to write his Laṅkākāṇḍa from Tulsi's Rāmāyaṇa. Some of the stories are not given in Vālmīki and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇas.* For example : There is a story about Hanumān who was flying over Nandigrāma, lifting in his hand the whole Gandhamādana Mountain. Sundarananda has narrated that when Bharata saw the flying figure, he first took him for a devil and by shooting an arrow at him, he made Hanumān fall down on the earth. But when Bharata learnt that he was a friend and servant of Śrī Rāma, he apologised to him and putting Hanumān on the point of his arrow he sent him quickly to Laṅkā. This story is added by Sundarananda in Sarga 73. Sundarananda has again added another incident with this story. He has written that when Hanumān was going back to Laṅkā, Bharata wrote a letter

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to Śrī Rāma narrating all the news about Ayodhyā, the Capital and handed it to Hanumān. After this, Sundarananda has given a story in Sarga 22 about Hanumān who was going back with the Mountain to return it to its original place. The *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* and the Rāmāyaṇas of Vālmīki and Tulasīdāsa have remained silent on this point.

Similarly, in the Uttarakāṇḍa, Sundarananda has given some new stories. For example : The battle between Rāvaṇa and Māndhātā in Sarga 23, the dialogue between Rāvaṇa and Bāli in Sarga 23, and the story about Brahmā who was giving Rāvaṇa the Śatanāmi (hundred-name) Mantras. These stories are not mentioned by Vālmīki, Tulasī or by the author of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

Sundarananda not only adds new stories of his own in his Rāmāyaṇa, but when he follows the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa,* he leaves out many stories formed there. For example, he has left out half of the story of Mitrā-Varuṇa (in Uttarakāṇḍa, Sarga 42). When Sundarananda follows Vālmīki, he would fully follow him. But in many places he has wanted to be original. In Yuddhakāṇḍa (Laṅkākāṇḍa), he has followed Vālmīki by translating, but he has added the story about a Yajñya destroyed by Rāvaṇa which is not given by Vālmīki. This is added from the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

In Laṅkākāṇḍa too, Sundarananda has not adhered to the numbers of the Sargas in Vālmīki and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇas,* but has exercised great freedom in this matter. For example, if he had followed Vālmīki he would have put the story of the battle between Rāvaṇa and Sahasra Arjuna in Sarga 29 of Laṅkākāṇḍa, but he put it in the Sarga 18. He has elaborated the chapters in Laṅkākāṇḍa and Uttarakāṇḍa, but he gives in the end of the Kāṇḍa the number of the Sarga. Therefore, we can say that he was not following any particular way or line.

Thus, in writing the Rāmāyaṇa, Sundarananda has practised great liberty and made his work as original as possible. But, after doing so much in his work, it seems that he could not put away his love of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.* He, at the end of every Sarga always writes इति श्री अध्यात्मरामायणे—(This is the end of chapter so and so of such and such Kāṇḍa of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*), although his Rāmāyaṇa is not a literal translation of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

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And this is the importance of the translation of Sundarananda. He has presented his own Rāmāyaṇa to the Nepālī-speaking people, making it an original and free story. Another remarkable thing in him is that he has tried to create a Nepālī background for his Rāmāyaṇa. For example : There is a *Vaidya* (Doctor) of Vārāṇasī whose name is Suṣeṇa. He speaks like a Nepālī *Vaidya*, when he says—'One must have patience in difficulty. I will see by giving the patient the medicine' (Page 414). There is no Suṣeṇa in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, and Vālmīki and Tulasīdāsa have only mentioned his name and given no other details. But in Sundarananda's Rāmāyaṇa, Suṣeṇa's words are taken from the mouth of a typical Nepālī *Vaidya*.

There are many places mentioned in this Prose Rāmāyaṇa, where the author has tried to depict the Nepālī background and culture. He has been able to picture his ideas with a few typical words. In Nepālī, the word *Madesh* means 'plains area' and *Byansi* means the rice-growing hill areas. Sundarananda has used these typical words in his Rāmāyaṇa.

We find that though the Rāmāyaṇa of Sundarananda is the translation from Sanskrit, Sundarananda has given Sanskrit ślokas as the Invocation in his Bālakāṇḍa as follows:[5]

श्री गणेशाय नमः श्री रामचन्द्राय नमः
अगजाननपद्मार्कं गजाननमहर्निशम् ।
अनेकदन्तं भक्तानामेकदन्तमुपास्महे ॥ १ ॥
नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् ।
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥ २ ॥

In Uttarakāṇḍa he has again written the second Sanskrit verse quoted above : नारायणं etc.

The original manuscript of Sundarananda's Rāmāyaṇa is of Nepālī hand-made yellow-cloured paper. There are altogether

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[5] Greetings to Shri Gaṇeśa and greetings to Lord Rāmachandra, who is seated on the Padma-blossom. You (Gaṇeśa) have many teeth and we, thy devotee, want one of them.

Greetings to Lord Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) who is a man of supreme quality. Also greetings to Devī Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Wisdom.

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448 pages written on one side only. The size of each page is 7-2/4×16 inches.[6]

Nepālī *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa* written by Pandit Chakrapani Chalisey (1883-1958 A.D.). Pandit Chakrapani Chalisey was first for many years the editor of 'Sundari' and 'Gorkha Patra', the Nepālī monthly at Vārāṇasī. Then he went back to Kathmandu as a Government servant and served as the clerk of the Gorkha Bhāṣā Prakāshani Samiti. He served for many years the Nepālī language and literature. Besides being a well-known Sanskrit scholar, he has written many distinguished books in Nepālī also. The Nepālī *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa* written by him is popular among Nepālī people.

This Rāmāyaṇa is based on the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. The Author, therefore, has quoted in introduction of his *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa* the verse :

ज्येष्ठो जयति वाल्मीकिः सर्गबन्धे प्रजापतिः ।
यः सर्वहृदयालीनं काव्यं रामायणं व्यधात् ।।[7]

"Hail to Vālmīki, the creator of Mahākāvya, who composed the Rāmāyaṇa in which the hearts of all are aborbed."

He further says and salutes the Ādi Kavi Vālmīki : "A hundred times I greet the Ādi Kavi—Maharṣi Vālmīki who is the first driver of the wheel of poetry in this world, by whom the Ādi Kāvya about Śrī Rāma was written, on reading which the reader thinks himself purified."

The Nepālī *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa* has altogether 148 pages excluding 4 pages of Preface. There are seven Kāṇḍas—Bāla, Ayodhyā, Āraṇya, Kiṣkindhā, Sundara, Yuddha and Uttara. The author has started his Bālakāṇḍa with the śloka[8], the meaning of which is—

"One who is sitting on the throne, with Sītā on his lap
And with him, the three brothers and Hanumān,
One who is thinking about how his people will be happy,
We should be ready to worship the same as Great
benevolent Raghunāth."

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6 Preface of the Rāmāyaṇa of Sundarananda, p. 9.
7 This is from Kṣemendra's *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī*, Ed.
8 Nepālī *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa*, Preface, p. 1.

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Shri Chakrapani again writes:[9]

'One day Mahātmā Muni Vālmīki was in his āśrama. That day Devaṛṣi Nārada reached there without any notice. On seeing this guest Nārada, the Mahātmā greeted him and offered him the seat of honour. At that time Vālmīki asked Nārada—Oh Great Ṛṣi, in this world do you know anyone who is like God, benevolent, full of wisdom, polite, good-hearted, bright and brave? Whose fame is shining in this world like the rays of the Moon? Whom the Goddess Lakṣmī has adorned with jewellery and beauty? Just as the season of spring is the rejuvenator of Nature, who is the rejuvenator of the life of his subjects? Who is as full of goodness as the Ocean of the gems?'

After hearing all these questions from Vālmīki, Nārada answered—'Oh Munīśvara, you have asked very good questions. But the individual you have asked about is no other but Lord Śrī Rāma. In this world there is no other man than Lord Rāma himself who has good nature, is kind-hearted, speaker of truth, famous, full of wisdom and pure. The greatness of Lord Śrī Rāma is boundless. There is no other king in this Tribhuvana (three worlds) like Sri Rāmacandra'.

Thus the story of Śrī Rāma's childhood goes on.

Pandit Chakrapani Chalisey has written this Rāmāyaṇa in very sweet and refined Nepālī language, and the style is very attractive.[10]

Just like the Vālmīki-*Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa* is tragic. The concluding lines are written in ślokas (verses), and give a pathetic description of the last years of Rāma's life as one by one all his loved ones depart. Here is given below the literal meaning of ślokas:[11]

He left Ayodhyā at the time of when he should have received all Royal comforts.

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9 Nepālī *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa*, pp. 1-2.

10 The first edition of this Rāmāyaṇa was published in 1915 A.D. and the second, in 1930, and the fifth in 1951. Publishers : Nepālī Bhāṣā Prakāshan Samiti.

11 Nepālī *Samkṣipta Rāmāyaṇa*, Preface, p. 2. This is also from a śloka at the end of Kṣemendra's *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī*, Ed.

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Went to the wilderness, deprived of love and beloved.
With great difficulty in crossing the sea, to fetch Jānakī back home.
And after bringing Jānakī to the Capital,
The gossip from the public upset him,
And he again became beloved-less.
These kinds of difficulties were thrown upon Sri Rāma,
This we know already.
Now we know that this world is full of difficulties and troubles,
And is meaningless also.
Therefore at the time of calamity,
The wise people should have patience in their heart.
The Rāmāyaṇa advises the people to be
Always happy in mind and not to be careless.

Ātma Rāmāyaṇa

The latest Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī prose was first published from Kathmandu, Nepal in 1959 A.D. The writer's name is Shri Bhairva Singh Thapa. In the Preface to this volume the writer says—The *Ātma Rāmāyaṇa* was written by Shri Swami Śankarānanda, the disciple of Shri Swami Prakāśānanda in Hindi. But there were only six Kāṇḍas. The last Kāṇḍa was not written. So this was not a complete Rāmāyaṇa. With the blessings of God, I myself wrote the last Kāṇḍa, calling it the Lava-Kuśa Kāṇḍa and thus prepared the whole of the *Ātma Rāmāyaṇa* in Nepālī and published it.

The author has named the Kāṇḍas as—1. Bāla, 2. Ayodhyā, 3. Āraṇya, 4. Kiṣkindhā, 5. Sundara, 6. Uttara and 7. Lava-Kuśa Kāṇḍas. This Rāmāyaṇa is based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

This Rāmāyaṇa is interesting in that the author has introduced the technical words of the Nirguṇa Sect of the Hindu Philosophy with the proper and collective nouns as symbols. This Rāmāyaṇa preaches the Advaita philosophy. It seems that the author of the *Ātma Rāmāyaṇa* is a devotee and follower of the Nirguṇa School of Hinduism. We get this idea from the end of this book.

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From the mouths of Kumāra Lava and Kumāra Kuśa proceed the doctrines of Nirguṇa Gyāna as follows : 'There is not other way for man to obtain Salvation except the *Gyāna* (Widsom). And to obtain wisdom, he has to study all the Religious Scriptures and should have the company of the *Sādhus* (learned and wise people). If they do so, they will have the knowledge that this world is nothing, only Brahman is truth.'

Here some Sanskrit sentences are given which are the Mottos of Nirguṇa School of the Vedānta Philosophy of Hiduism, i.e. ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या (only Brahman is the truth, and this world is nothing). सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म All this is Brahman; and एकं ब्रह्म द्वितीयं नास्ति (There is only one, the Brahman, and no other), and नेति नेति (It is not, it is not).

The names of the characters are all symbolic of concepts of Vedānta Philosophy. The names and their symbols are given below :

Symbols	*Names*
Ātmā	Rāmāyaṇa
Pañcakośa	Ayodhyā
Jīva	Daśaratha
Nivṛttijanya Vṛtti	Kausalyā
Viṣayadoṣa	Kaikeyī
Bhakti	Sumitrā
Gyāna	Rāma
Viveka	Lakṣmaṇa
Vairāgya	Bharata
Vichāra	Śatrughna
Viśvāsa	Viśvāmitra
Veda	Vasiṣṭha
Bhrānti	Tāḍakā
Īśvarārādhanā	Yagna
Kāma	Mārīca
Tāpa	Gautama
Kṣamā	Ahalyā
Samsāra	Janakapura
Ahaṁkāra	Dhanus
Śānti	Sītā
Prema	Paraśurāma

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Symbols	*Names*
Kaivalya	Kuśadhvaja
Namratā	Urmilā
Virati	Māṇḍavī
Śānta	Śrutikīrti
Sukarma	Sumantra
Akhaṇḍa	Ratna
Nirbhaya	Vana
Brahma Vidyā	Śrī Gaṅgā
Akarma	Atri Muni
Dhṛti	Anusūyā
Jijñāsā	Mallaḥ (Kewaṭ)
Dharma	Naukā (Boat)
Uparama	Bharadvāja
Iḍā, Pingalā, Suṣumnā	Triveṇī
Dama	Vālmīki
Kūṭasthatā	Citrakūṭa
Karma	Jayanta
Akriyā	Vana
Śrīmukhavākya	Mudrā
Śraddhā	Cūḍāmaṇi
Līlā	Pul (Bridge)
Aśaktatā	Śakti
Mahāvākya	Sañjīvanī
Mati	Mandodarī
Satśāstra	Droṇagiri
Nirlobha	Makaradhvaja
Jāgṛti	Dhobi (washermen)
Śama	Sutīkṣaṇa
Advaita	Agastya
Jitendriya	Pañcavaṭī
Tṛṣṇā	Śūrpaṇakhā
Moha	Khara-Dūṣaṇa
Nāmarūpa	Kapaṭa Mṛga
Dharma	Jaṭāyus
Gambhīratā	Pampāsarovara
Niṣkāma Karma	Nārada
Lobha	Bāli
Santoṣa	Sugrīva
Dhyāna	Vana

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Symbols	***Names***
Suṣupti	Kuśa
Indriya	Horse
Rāga	Meghanāda
Anurāga	Suṣeṇa
Dveṣa	Abhirāma
Rati	Sulocanā
Krodha	Kumbhakarṇa
Ajñāna	Rāvaṇa
Svapna	Dhobinī (washerwoman)
Laya	Lava
Kalpanā	Aśvamedha Yagna
Lakṣya	Vana
Satsanga	Hanumān
Akrodha	Aṅgada
Titikṣā	Tārā
Śuddhacitta	Sphaṭikaśilā
Tāpapuñja	Kanyā
Sattva Guṇa	Sampāti
Śaṅkā	Laṅkā
Āśā	Samudra (Sea)
Manoratha	Jala (water)
Vihitakarma	Vibhīṣaṇa
Aśoka	Vāṭikā

The wedding of four princes

Gyāna-Śānti	Rāma and Sītā
Viveka-Namratā	Lakṣmaṇa and Urmilā
Vairāgya-Virati	Bharata and Māṇḍavī
Vicāra-Śānti	Śatrughna and Śrutikīrti

When King Daśaratha was contemplating for a son, for which he with his three queens were praying, God became glad and they heard a voice from the sky—"Oh King, I am very pleased with you. Ask what you want." Then King Daśaratha replied—"Oh Lord, you have done so much for me. I only want to have your *darśana* always." Then again the voice from the sky was heard—"Oh King, I am formless, boundless, only the yogis from their *Samādhi* could have a *darśana* of me.

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Therefore one cannot see me always. But the learned and wise people who are full of *Gyāna* (wisdom) can see me always. Oh King, you also should obtain the *Gyāna*."

King Daśaratha said—"Oh Lord, the learned and wise people can see you through Nirguṇa (formless) look. But I want to see you in form and shape. So please accept my prayers."

Again the voice of the Lord was heard—"Evamastu" (As you wish).

After some time, King Daśaratha had four sons from his three queens.[12]

The language of this volume is pure Nepālī and the style of narration is very beautiful. But we cannot estimate the popularity of this *Ātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī Ślokas (verses)

(a) *Composers of Rāmāyaṇa of pre-Bhānubhakta era*

Only two writers have been found as yet, who had written poems based on the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa* before the celebrated writer of famous Nepālī *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bhānubhakta. These two are Gumāni Pant (1790-1846 A.D.) and Pandit Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. Gumāni Pant was born in Almorah in the Kumaon hills of India. His mother tongue was Kumaoni and he has written many poems in this language. There is a great similarity between Kumaoni and Nepālī. Gumāni Pant was well conversant with Nepālī also. He has written about one dozen ślokas in Nepālī. In 1916, Prof. Deviprasad Pandey of Almorah college had edited and published a book[13] in Hindi by Gumāni Pant called 'Sanskrit Language and Literature', in which the following lines based on Rāmāyaṇa are found :

राजा बड़ा दशरथ की बुहारी कन्या पनि भूप जनकजी ।
क्या मन्दंनि रावण बस परयाकी हा राम हा देवर तात ।।

[She (Sītā) was the daughter-in-law of the great king Daśaratha and the daughter of the great king Janaka. Now she

12 *Ātma Rāmāyaṇa,* Bālakāṇḍa, pp. 2-3.
13 *Buingal,* Editor Sri Kamal Dikshit, p. 14.

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who is in captivation of Rāvaṇa, says—'Oh Rāma, oh my brother-in-law (Lakṣmaṇa). Oh father and mother!']

These are very pathetic lines for Sītā, we can easily understand the heart-burning of poor Sītā.

(b) *Rāmāyaṇa of Pandit Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa (Upādhyāya)*

Pandit Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa (1811-1861 A.D.) was born in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Later he came to Vārāṇasī and translated all the seven kāṇḍas of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.* Although Pandit Raghunātha had translated the whole Rāmāyaṇa with different Sargas and different Kāṇḍas, only the Sundarakāṇḍa can be found in printed form. The credit for its publication goes to the learned editor Pandit Dīnānātha Sapkota. It was first published in 1888 A.D. from Sakshi Vinayak Gorkha Press, Vārāṇasī. Thus, though written earlier, Pandit Raghunātha's work was published after Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyaṇa. That is why, according to Pandit Dīnānātha, the intellectuals did not see the Rāmāyaṇa of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa first, and therefore they gave the title of the *Ādi Kavi* (the first poet) to Ācārya Bhānubhakta who came to the literary field a little later.[14]

Pandit Dīnānātha Sapkota, the Editor, says : Poet Raghunātha was the first one to write the Rāmāyaṇa in Ślokas in the Nepālī language following the style of the Sanskrit *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.* In the later time, the celebrated poet of Nepālī literature, Bhānubhakta has also adopted this style and method, and written his Rāmāyaṇa in verses based on the Sanskrit *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*[15]

However, Pandit Raghunātha's Sundarakāṇḍa did not gain as much popularity as the Bhānubhakta's *Rāmāyaṇa.* The reason is the difficult Sanskritised language and style.

There are five Sargas in Raghunātha's Sundarakāṇḍa. The number of Ślokas is as follows : I—29 ślokas, II—30, III—53, IV—40, V—35; Total : 187 Ślokas.

The poet has used the old Sanskrit metres in this Sundarakāṇḍa. The names of the metres are—Indravajrā, Upajāti, Mālinī, Mandākrāntā-Rathoddhatā, Śārdūlavikrīḍita, Śikhariṇī, Sragdharā, Svagata and Vasanta tilak.

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[14] *Rāmāyaṇa,* Sundarakāṇḍa, Preface, p. 7 [15] *Ibid.*, 3.

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Here are some lines from the Sundarakāṇḍa. The poet narrates the condition of Sītā, when Hanumān met her at Aśokavana :

She (Sītā) was very weak and was lying on the earth with very dirty clothes.
She was terribly sorrowful and calling Rāma night and day.
There was nobody to show mercy upon her, Thus she was starved and fasting without food. Hanumān, who was hiding amidst the branches of the tree, saw her weeping.
(Sundarakāṇḍa, Sarga 2, Śloka 5)

To make Sītā frightened,
There came more demon-women.
One of them began to say—
You have spoilt your youth for nothing.
If you stay with King Rāvaṇa,
You will have all happiness and comforts in your life.
The other demon-woman said—Why are you (Sītā) delaying in becoming the consort of Rāvaṇa?
(Sundarakāṇḍa, Sarga 2, Śloka 22)

After the knowledge of Sītā's whereabouts, Rāma wanted to send his devotee Hanumān to Laṅkā (Ceylon) to see Sītā. But Hanumān first hesitated to go, because he thought that Sītā would not know him. Then Śrī Rāma gave to Hanumān his ring which was known to Jānakī.

When Hanumān reached Aśokavana, where Sītā was in captivity, he first gave his identity to Sītā. But at first Sītā did not believe Hanumān. Then he handed over that ring given by Rāma to Sītā. The following stanza is based on the same incident :

When Hanumān reached near Sītā
He gave that ring of Rāma to one maid-servant,
And said—There is my name written on this ring.
Go and give this to Jānakī.
Do not doubt me. Look at this ring which I have brought with great care.
After saying this Hanumān handed over the ring to the maid-servant.
That was a truly wonderful ring.
(Sundarakāṇḍa, Sarga 2, Śloka 21)

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In his Sundarakāṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa, the poet has used many Hindi and Urdu words besides Sanskrit. This is not objectionable, because one who has a good knowledge of many language, can use the words equivalent to the words of his own language.

Pandit Raghunātha ends his Sundarakāṇḍa's 2nd Sarga like this :

> The Story of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* which was told by Śrī Śaṅkara to Pārvatī, about the incident of Hanumān reaching the place where Jānakī was, that story is now ended.

Had the scholars been successful in finding the rest of the Kāṇḍas of Raghunātha's Rāmāyaṇa, it would have been more helpful to compare with Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyaṇa. But the search has not been concluded as yet.

The Rāmāyaṇas of Bhānubhakta Ācārya

The great poet Bhānubhakta Ācārya (1814-1889 A.D.) wrote the Rāmāyaṇa, the first epic in Nepālī, along with *Badhuśikṣā, Bhaktamālā, Praśnottaramālā,* etc., which are all very important works in Nepālī.

Born in 1814 in Tanahu, West Nepal, Bhānubhakta Ācārya introduced a revolutionary change in Nepālī poetry. He was a giant among other Nepālī poets. Bhānubhakta means 'the devotee of the sun', and it was no mere coincidence that he shone forth from the literary firmament of the period like the Sun. With him Nepālī poetry came of age. For the first time in the history of Nepālī literature we hear in his works the deep and firm affection for the Nepālī people and their culture, and find the Nepālī landscape pictured with inimitable charm and grace.

Ācārya Bhānubhakta was born in 29 Āṣāḍha, 1871, Vikrami Samvat (July 13, 1814 A.D.) at the village Ramgha in Tanahu to the west of the Nepal Valley. Regarding the early life of the poet, a bunch of legends has been let loose by the conflicting accounts of the different biographers. While according to Motiram Bhatta, Bhānubhakta was taught Sanskrit literature, grammar and astrology by his grandfather, Shri Kṛṣṇa Ācārya, the poet's great-grandson Pandit Naranātha Ācārya observed that

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Bhānubhakta received his early education at Vārāṇasī and wrote his early poems there. Near his village Ramgha in Tanahu and at Chundi he had his Besi—the rice-producing land. All this the poet has described at the end of his work *Praśnottaramālā* in a verse.[16] This line is as follows—

> They called him Bhānubhakta and they called Chundi his rice-growing land.
>
> He belonged to Tanahu, and in the village Ramgha his home. He had.
>
> Famous among his people, he was a scholar and a poet too
>
> One thing more, he translated this book and made it simple enough for you.

An incident in Bhānubhakta's life which made him decide to write the *Rāmāyaṇa* makes interesting reading, though its certainty may be challenged. One day the poet was resting by the river-side where he encountered a grass-cutter on his way to the distant market to dispose of the load of grass which he carried on his back. In the course of the conversation it transpired that the grass-cutter had put by a certain amount of money. The poest asked to what use he was going to put his savings. The grass-cutter replied, 'I wish to dig a well in the village where I live, so that when I am no more, people may have something to remember me by.' This simple utterance of the grass-cutter awakened in the poet a desire to do something so that his name might survive his death. When this stream of thought was flowing in his mind he felt like writing a poem and he did write:[17]

> Grass-cutting was his calling and that way he earned and saved some money.
>
> He constructed a well (of drinking water) because an immortal being he really wanted to be.
>
> He was a poor man and his home worse than a hut but how rich in intelligence was he?
>
> This is Bhānubhakta, a rich man indeed, but is Bhānubhakta as good as he?

---

16 Academy-Journal, Nepālī Academy, Darjeeling, p. 5.

17 Translation from the original poetry given in Motiram Bhaṭṭa's 'Life of Bhānubhakta.'

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No wells, no rest-houses of any sort owe their existence to my labour.

All my wealth and all that I have—I have inside my house—there, in a corner.

A lesson, yes, a good lesson indeed, he has taught me this day.

Shame, this life of mine is but a worthless one, but how to earn a name, anyway?

And then and there he resolved to write the *Rāmāyaṇa.* This Nepālī *Rāmāyaṇa* has become the necessary adjunct of every Nepālī household. The famous critic Dr. Ishwar Baral says[18], 'Though this *Rāmāyaṇa* is a translation of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, the translation is literal in some places and in other places it is original. If a translator has no poetic mind there comes no beauty in his work. We cannot doubt Bhānubhakta's poetic ability. In translating, Bhānubhakta became original wherever he has to describe the Nepālī life. Wherever he has diverged from the original, he has established the beauty of the Nepālī way of life. We realise the distinction of his style by comparing his *Rāmāyaṇa* with Raghunātha's *Sundarakāṇḍa.* We therefore do not agree that the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Bhānubhakta is a mere translation of the Sanskrit *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

In the age of Bhānubhakta, both the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* were well known in Nepal. Why did Bhānubhakta choose the latter one? Goswami Tulasīdāsa liked the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* because the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* does not accept the idea of the *Bhakti* (devotion) and the God. The *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* is the biography of Śrī Rāma, the excellent man (Puruṣottama). Many scholars have accepted the theory that the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* is the work of Swami Rāmānanda. There is the assimilation of Gyāna (wisdom) and the *Bhakti* (worship) in it. Swami Rāmānanda had followed his teacher Swami Rāmānuja on the subject of *Bhakti*, but in *Gyāna*, he was the supporter of the theory of the Advaita Brahman (Brahman is inseparable). His philosophy was accepted by his disciples Kabir and Raidas in later years. Rāma is the Lord, those who worship him as the Lord will be able to cross

[18] Pragati 3/3, p. 114.

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the ocean of troubles and sins. The philosophy of Rāmānanda is Vedānta, *i.e.*, The Advaita (one without a second). For these reasons the emotional heart of Bhānubhakta was attracted to this Vedānta Philosophy.

There are all the seven cantos in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Bhānubhakta. The number of the ślokas in each canto are being given below :

> Bāla—139, Ayodhyā—125, Āraṇya—122, Kiṣkindhā—143, Sundara—154, Yuddha—379, Uttara—257; Total—1,117.

Bhānubhakta translated the Bālakāṇḍa of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* in 1841 A.D. and the Ayodhyā, Āraṇya, Kiṣkindhā and Sundara Kāṇḍas in 1852 A.D. and the Yuddha and Uttara Kāṇḍas in 1855 A.D.

To find where Bhānubhakta has added anything original in his translation of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* we will analyse each canto.

1. *Bālakāṇḍa*

The graces of Rāma as recited by Lord Śiva and by Sītā are in the *Adhyātma* and Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyaṇas. The story of the evolution of the Earth is in both volumes. The Yagna by King Daśaratha for the birth of sons is narrated in both volumes. However, Rāma's departure with Muni Viśvāmitra, Sītā's Swayamvara, and the stories of Ahalyā, Paraśurāma, and the wedding of Sītā are in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, but are only very briefly described by Bhānubhakta.

2. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*

This canto of both Rāmāyaṇas starts with the story of the preparation for the coronation of Rāma. The original story written in both volumes is the same, but Bhānubhakta has left out the portion of Vālmīki giving his own introduction in *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (Page 91). The story of Daśaratha's death, Bharata's refusal in accepting the kingdom is also given in the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa. The meeting of Bharata and Rāma in Citrakūṭa is narrated by Bhānubhakta in 7 pages (26 ślokas) in his Rāmāyaṇa to equal the 7 pages in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

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3. *Āraṇyakāṇḍa*

In the beginning of this canto a story of Jayanta (Bird) who pokes its nose on Sītā's body is written by Bhānubhakta, but it is not given in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.* The killing of Virādha, and the salvation of Sutīkṣaṇa are narrated in both the Rāmāyaṇas. The story of Śūrpaṇakhā and Khara-Dūṣaṇa in Pañcavaṭī is given in both volumes. At the time of Sītā-haraṇa, the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* narrates the coming of a false Sītā, but Bhānubhakta has left it out. The coming of Rāvaṇa in disguise as a Sādhu to take away Sītā is also narrated in the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa and the story of the death of Jaṭāyu and Kabandha, the reception of Rāma by Śabarī, and the arrival of Rāma at Pampāsara is also depiced in it.

4. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*

The beginning of the canto in both of the Rāmāyaṇas is the same. Rāma's first meeting with Sugrīva and Hanumān and the details of the enmity between Bāli and Sugrīva are given by both of the poets. When Rāvaṇa was forcefully taking Sītā through the sky, she throws down her ornaments towards Sugrīva and other Vānaras. This incident is narrated by both the Rāmāyaṇas. The rest of the incidents, however, like the killing of Bali, the meeting of Vānaras who have gone in search of Sītā, with Yoginī, Aṅgada's sorrow on being unfit to cross the sea, knowing the whereabouts of Sītā from Sampāti—are narrated by Bhānubhakta in a very few ślokas.

5. *Sundarakāṇḍa*

The Sundarakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa of Bhānubhakta begins, like the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* from the entrance of Hanumān in Laṅkā. The meeting with Surasā, the description of Laṅkā city, are written in the Nepālī and *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* as well. the other incidents are given in the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa briefly only.

6. *Laṅkā (Yuddha) Kāṇḍa*

In this canto the advice given by Mandodarī to Sītā is left out by Bhānubhakta. The advice of Vibhīṣaṇa and his discarding of Rāvaṇa, the Tilak of Vibhīṣaṇa, etc., are narrated by

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Bhānubhakta also. In the depiction of the story of battle with Meghanāda, the killing of Atikāya, Śakti to Lakṣmaṇa, Sañjīvanī herbs, killing of Meghanāda, Rāvaṇa's meeting about the battle, Bhānubhakta follows the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* but in short.

Bhānubhakta is silent upon the crying of Mandodarī on the death of Rāvaṇa. He has written about Sītā's receiving of the news of Rāma's victory, but he is silent again on the bringing of Sītā in a palanquin to the presence of Rāma.

7. *Uttarakāṇḍa*

Bhānubhakta begins as in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* on the incident of the meeting of Rāma with the sages. Rāvaṇa's descendants, Rāvaṇa's victory, Rāvaṇa's defeat by Bāli at Śvetadvīpa (white island) are depicted in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, but Bhānubhakta has left this out. The killing of sage Śūdra, the sending away of Sītā at Rāma's wishes, *Rāmagītā*, the learning by heart of Rāmāyaṇa by Lava and Kuśa, and their visit to Rāmāśvamedha, Rāma's order to bring Sītā back, but Sītā's entering the earth, then the throne being left to his sons and nephews, the death of Lakṣmaṇa, end of Rāma and the end of the dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī are given in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* and the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa as well.

Thus we can have an idea from the above analysis that Bhānubhakta follows the story of Rāma till the end, though he was to condense to make his Rāmāyaṇa short, and leave out many incidents and details. Bhānubhakta's friend Pandit Dharmadutta Gyawali felt so much when Bhānubhakta left the ślokas called *Rāmagītā* without translation. This *Rāmagītā* is given in the fifth Sarga of Uttarakāṇḍa. He requested him to translate it also. While Bhānubhakta was very sick and on his death-bed unable to write himself, he dictated to his son Rāmakaṇṭha the whole *Rāmagītā*. Thus the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa was completed.

Some literal English translation of the ślokas of the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa are given below :

> One day Nārada went to Satyaloka with a view to do the world good; Brahmā was there and he fell at his feet; so he (Brahmā) was pleased. As soon as Brahmā permitted him to ask what he desired to ask. He said to

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him knowing that Brahmā was pleased : 'Oh Brahmā, I have heard everything, auspicious and inauspicious. There is nothing left for me to hear, yet I have a desire. When the Kaliyuga will come, human beings will be loose in morals; and will commit sins of many kinds being impelled to do so by low desires.

—Bālakāṇḍa, ślokas 1-2.

In his Nepālī version of the *Rāmagītā*, Bhānubhakta says that all men are brothers. He affirms that the universal spirit is without a second, and all that we see and observe are his manifestations and the different conditions, he is the source of energy or force, matter of motion, soul or universal spirit. The *Rāmagītā* teaches that he who desires release from the bonds (of passion, etc.) must cease to conceive of a distinction between the Soul and the Infinite Spirit, and must reflect that he and Brahman (Supreme Spirit) are one.[19]

A few lines of *Rāmagītā* in English[20] translation are given below :

'O Lord, Thou art the pure knowledge—all human souls have their origin in thee. Despite being invisible, you assumed the human form to cast aside the sinful burden of the world. This is thy Līlā (Divine Drama). The true devotees know all these. They say this Līlā is on account of thy merciful and compassionate divine nature. It is foe-like ignorance which causes all creatures to revolve. Know it for certain, that it is self-knowledge which can put an end to ignorance. It cannot be destroyed by one resorting to various rites with one's desire for getting pleasure and Lordship. There is no other way but wisdom to destroy ignorance, Crystal appears red in touch with red colour. The same is the case of the soul in contact with the three accidents. Crystal is not affected by the merits of red hue. The soul also has no concern with the attributes of the different principles.

—Uttarakāṇḍa, *Rāmagītā*, ślokas 122, 127, 136.

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19 Pandit Paramhans Mishra 'Where Nepal Teaches the Foreign Nations'—Preface, p. 2.

20 Translation by Pandit P. Mishra.

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Bhānubhakta has adorned his Rāmāyaṇa with different metres of Sanskrit. These are—Śārdūlavikrīḍita, Śikhariṇī, Sragdharā, Indravijayā, Vasantatilakā, Mālinī, Drutavilambita, among which he has most frequently used the Śārdūlavikrīḍita.

The first edition of the Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa, with a short biography written by Pandit Motiram Bhatta was published from Bharat Jeevan Press, Vārāṇasī in 1885 A.D. After a long time, Pandit Homnath Khatiwada again edited and published the Bhānubhakta Rāmāyaṇa from Sarva Hitaishi Press, Vārāṇasī adding his own translation of the Rāmāśvamedha Yagna as the eighth canto. Bhānubhakta has been popular since then. Dr. Parasmani Pradhan edited and published an edition in 1952 from Darjeeling, and in 1955, the Nepālī Sāhitya Sammelan, Darjeeling, published an edition by Pandit Surya Bikram Gyawali.

To compose the Rāmāyaṇa was for the poet a labour of love. Perhaps he decided to undertake this stupendous task, moved by the desire to bring the story of Rāma to every household in a language spoken and understood from one end of the country to another. If so, he succeeded admirably. For, even within his life-time, a house without a hand-written copy of the Rāmāyaṇa could hardly be found.

The reasons why his life-work gained such success are not far to seek. Firstly, the subject itself is of eternal human interest, the struggle of good and evil, and, after a long and painful struggle, the triumph of the former. Secondly, all through its seven long Cantos, it is keyed to a regular verse-pattern Śārdūlavikrīḍita which is extremely lively in pace and easy on the ears. Śārdūlavikrīḍita is of course a Sanskrit metre but since the great success of the Rāmāyaṇa of Bhānubhakta it has been used so frequently and with such telling effect by other poets that it may be considered a part of the Nepālī literary tradition. Thirdly, it is written in simple and chaste Nepālī, the usual literary devices like elaborate alliteration, stilted metaphors, and far-fetched similes have been avoided. Familiar Nepālī expressions are used in place of high-sounding words and phrases in Sanskrit. All things considered, this is the first major work in Nepālī to make use of what we know as standard Nepālī. The indebtedness of the Nepālī-speaking people to Bhānubhakta, whether they are within or outside Nepal, is

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immense and unmeasurable. His memory is cherished even to this day as the father of Nepālī poetry.

Ādarśa Rāghava : The Modern Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa

The prominent Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Somnath Sigdel was born in Kathmandu, Nepal in 1884. He had his early education from Kathmandu and Vārāṇasī (India). Later he passed the examination 'Kāvya-Tīrtha' in Sanskrit from Calcutta with distinction and obtained the highest title of 'Paṇḍitarāj'. After some years he came back to Kathmandu and became the honourable member of the Royal Nepal Academy. He wrote many books on the difficult subjects like Poetics.

Ādarśa Rāghava is the major original epic of the modern age by Pandit Somnath Sigdel. The first edition of this book was published in 1948 A.D. and the third and the latest edition in 1971 A.D. Its language is Sanskritised Nepālī so that it is difficult for the ordinary literate reader to understand. In the Preface of this volume, the poet himself says[21] : This is the story of the great couple of the Ancient period, born and brought up in the area of the two sacred rivers—the Sarayū (in India)[22] and Bāgmatī (in Nepal) which flow from the Himālayas. This ancient couple has been the ideal for the Āryan World. In the life story and the characters of this ideal couple, we can see the ancient Āryan culture studded with the gems of their incomparable qualities. These gems are not shining for themselves, but for the whole eastern countries of the world. These are the treasures for the East. All could have the brightness of those valuable gems through the medium of literature and the brightness would enter the heart of the good people!

Pandit Somnath has followed the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, but the way of producing the whole thing is his own. A scholar of Sanskrit and Grammar, the author has also gained the fame of 'Mahā Kavi' in Modern Nepālī literature, and *Ādarśa Rāghava* has established its place in the favour of the intellectuals.

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[21] *Ādarśa Rāghava*, Preface p. 1, Published by Pustak Sansar, Kathmandu.

[22] The town Janakpur which is the birth-place of Jānakī (Sītā) is situated in Nepal. The river Sarayū flows in the heart of Ayodhyā, the then kingdom of Śrī Rāmachandra.

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There are altogether 16 Sargas (chapters) but no Kāṇḍas (Cantos) as in former Rāmāyaṇas in Sanskrit and Nepālī. The author has numbered each of the Sargas in Sanskrit numbers, for example, Prathama Sarga (First Sarga), Dvitīya Sarga (Second Sarga) and so on. Given below are the number of ślokas and the name of the metres given in each Sarga of this book :

Sarga	*Number of ślokas*	*Name of Metres*
1	73	Vasantatilakā
2	70	Indravajrā
3	61	Prithvī
4	79	Puṣpitāgrā
5	61	Viyoginī
6	65	Mālinī
7	54	Mandākrāntā
8	55	Drutavilambita
9	64	Praharṣiṇī
10	65	Gīti
11	69	Śārdūlavikrīḍita
12	57	Mattamayūrā
13	58	Hariṇī
14	54	Bhujangaprayāta
15	75	Gīti, Sragviṇī, Śālinī, Puṣpitāgrā, Anuṣṭubh, Śikhariṇī, Pṛthvī, Pañchacāmara and Vasantatilakā.
16	97	Upagīti and Kūṭaka
	Total : 1057 ślokas	

The analysis of the subject-matter in each Sarga of this Rāmāyaṇa is as follows :

Prathama Sarga

Mangalācaraṇa (prayer), Upakrama, Sāketa (Ayodhyā), ancient accounts, the story of mother and father, King Daśaratha's prayer for issue, the birth of Rāma etc., and the merriments.

Dvitīya Sarga

Household scene of King Daśaratha, Education of the children, the arrival of Sage Viśvāmitra, the departure of

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Viśvāmitra with the princes to the Āśrama of Viśvāmitra, the disturbance of his Yagna, the reception of Rāma, rest in the night.

Tritīya Sarga

Morning, departure to Mithilā, the break of Śivadhanuṣa (bow of Lord Śiva), engagement of Rāma with Sītā and wedding ceremony, the defeat of Paraśurāma, departure to Ayodhyā.

Caturtha Sarga

The old age of King Daśaratha, disturbance in the ceremony to choose Rāma as the future king, Rāma's exile-story, love of Lakṣmaṇa, the devotion of Sītā to her husband, departure to the forest, sorrowful Ayodhyā, weeping of Bharata, Bharata's departure to Citrakūṭa.

Pañcama Sarga

Lamentation of Rāma for the late father, consolation from Sage Vasiṣṭha, the Prayer of Bharata, the strong faith of Rāma, departure of Bharata to Ayodhyā.

Ṣaṣṭha Sarga

The beauty of Nature in autumn, entering Pañcavaṭī, āśrama of Rāma, daily routine, the time of winter, the defeat of Śūrpaṇakhā, killing of Mārīca.

Saptama Sarga

The cunning of Rāvaṇa, kidnapping of Sītā, going to Laṅkā, the sadness of Rāma, Rāma's passion, the last rites of Jaṭāyus and Kabandha, reception from Śabarī (a woman of low caste) reaching Pampā lake.

Aṣṭama Sarga

The Spring, the feelings of Rāma towards Sītā, meeting with Vānaras.

Navama Sarga

Receiving a friend, meeting and friendship with Sugrīva, Coronation of Sugrīva, changing of seasons, assembling of Vānaras to fight, the courage of Hanumān.

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Daśama Sarga

Enthusiasm and courage, crossing the ocean, the appearance of Sītā, dialogue between Hanumān and Sītā, destruction of Laṅkā, burning of Laṅkā, return of Hanumān, arrangement for journey to Laṅkā.

Ekādaśa Sarga

Rāvaṇa's bad nature, journey of victory, construction of bridge by Vānaras, crossing the ocean, friendship with Vibhīṣaṇa, the diplomatic Aṅgada, fighting between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, killing of Rāvaṇa, meeting with Sītā and consolation to her, giving the kingdom of Laṅkā to Vibhīṣaṇa.

Dvādaśa Sarga

The enjoyment of victory, Rāma's journey by sky-route, reaching sage Bharadvāja's Āśrama, coming of Bharata and others for reception, meeting with his own people, merriments, entering the Royal palace of Ayodhyā, happiness of the people.

Trayodaśa Sarga

Royal reception to Rāma, Coronation of Rāma, Celebration in Ayodhyā and Rāma's visit to the city, sermons from the sage Vasiṣṭha, enjoyment among people, seeing off Sugrīva and others, merriment in the night.

Caturdaśa Sarga

Moon-rise, Rāma's speeches of happiness, Sītā's love of Rāma, administration duty and the thinking about the kingdom.

Pañcadaśa Sarga

Rāma's reign, devotion to Dharma (Religion), management of work, the beauty of the country, affection and devotion between the king and the subjects, military power, sending Sītā away, fame of Rāma.

Ṣoḍaśa Sarga

The world, sorrow of Lakṣmaṇa, sorrow of Sītā, birth and education of Lava and Kuśa, residing at Vālmīki's Āśrama, the

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condition of Rāma, Aśvamedha Yagna, the end of Sītā, the cheering to Rāma from the people.

Pandit Somnath composed his *Ādarśa Rāghava* at the age of sixty. He has given his thought more to the style of scholarly writing in comparison to the subject matter. This is the main reason why his work has remained in the limited world of learned people.

Ādarśa Rāghava is the story of an ideal man like Śrī Rāma. The epic is specially written for the people who can derive knowledge and ideals from the happy and pathetic life of Śrī Rāma. The ideal character of Śrī Rāma is incomparable. His teacher (Guru), the Sage Vasiṣṭha is very learned and ideal man of philosophical nature. So the epic is full of the stories of ideal characters.

The first Sarga of *Ādarśa Rāghava* starts from the greetings and prayers to the Lord. There is the greeting to Sage Vālmīki which goes thus—

'I salute and touch the sacred feet of the Ādi Kavi (First Poet) Vālmīki who wrote the famous epic on Śrī Rāma, who made his poetry the flag of fame for all the world.'[23] From this verse of greeting we could imagine that Pandit Somnath has followed the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki.

Poet Somnath is facile in the description of natural beauty. He is an expert in personifying the activities of Nature and expresses his thoughts in a very few words and similes. He writes about the sorrow of King Daśaratha at being issueless in the following verse:[24]

> 'Without knowledge and wisdom, human life is worthless. Wealth is worthless if it is not used for the benefit of the people. Without a wife, the household is charmless and the relatives get troubles. Without a Moon-like son this world is full of darkness.'

After the kidnapping of Sītā, the poet describes Śrī Rāma's grief thus:[25]

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[23] *Ādarśa Rāghava*, Sarga 1, śloka 6.
[24] *Ibid.*, Sarga 1, śloka 53.
[25] *Ibid.*, Sarga 7, śloka 36.

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'Oh, the precious garland of my heart is lost, oh, where could I find it now? This gives me so much pain in my heart. The beauty of the world is vanished for me. The peace of my mind is no more. My beloved friend has vanished from me and the brightest star had made my soul and life green and beautiful is set.'

Thus, poet Somnath has pictured the sorrow of Śrī Rāma and thus *Ādarśa Rāghava* is a tragedy of this world with Karuṇa Rasa (pathos).

Mero Rām or Rāmāyaṇa Sār

The modern period is regarded as the golden period of Nepālī literature. A new Rāmāyaṇa has been written during this period by the renowned poet of Nepālī, Pandit Lekhnath Sharma Paudyal. It is in verse and is based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. The poet has given to his book the title 'Mero Rāma' (My Rāma) or 'Rāmāyaṇa Sār' (the substance of the Rāmāyaṇa). Pandit Lekhnath is a celebrated poet of modern Nepal. His name is famed in the Nepālī-speaking world for his extraordinary knowledge of Sanskrit poetics and traditional philosophy which he revealed in his most beautiful poems. The Government of Nepal, in recognition of his genius awarded him the title of 'Kavi Śiromaṇi' (The Greatest Poet) in 1951 A.D.

Kavi Śiromaṇi Lekhnath Paudyal was born in 1884 A.D. in Pokhra district of Western Nepal. He had a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit language and he had started writing poetry at an early age. He died in Kathmandu in 1965 A.D. His famous works are *Buddhi-Vinod, Satya-Kali Samvād, Mero Rāma, Ritu-Vichār, Satya-Smriti, Lālitya* and *Taruṇa Tapasvī*.

The exact date of the writing of *Mero Rāma* is not known, but it does not appear to have been written before 1945 A.D. The first edition of this book was published in 1954 A.D.

As in Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyaṇa, all the seven Cantos of the Rāmāyaṇa—Bāla, Ayodhyā, Āraṇya, Kiṣkindhā, Sundara, Yuddha and Uttarakāṇḍas are given in *Mero Rāma*. From the beginning till the end there are the same incidents as in the previous Rāmāyaṇa. But the difference between the two Rāmāyaṇas is that Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyaṇa has more than one

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thousand ślokas while Lekhnath's Rāmāyaṇa has altogether 275 ślokas. This is the reason why the latter poet has given to his book the sub-title *Rāmāyaṇa Sār* (Substance of Rāmāyaṇa). The poet has given Rāma different names according to his good qualities, that is why he has named his book 'Mero Rāma' (My Rāma). The size of this book is small but it has the whole story of Śrī Rāma. Therefore this book comes in the category of Rāmāyaṇa. This Rāmāyaṇa is also based on the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*

In the last line of 138 out of 276 ślokas in *Mero Rāma*, the poet has addressed Śrī Rāma with different descriptive names. For example, the last ślokas run as follows :

> The people of Ayodhyā were overwhelmed in the brightness of the divine appearance of Rāma. The surrounding darkness of unbelief was dispersed and the oppressive cycle of life, death and rebirth ended.
>
> Celestial music began to sound. Showers of flowers began to fall from the heaven.
>
> May we glimpse Rāma, the Creator (Brahmā) everywhere in this world!

In the last line in this stanza, the Vyāpak Brahmā is a descriptive name for the Lord Rāma. Thus from *Mero Rāma*, we know 138 names of Śrī Rāma, each descriptive of an aspect of his noble character. The words of the names are printed in bold type in every line. Some of the adjectives for the Lord Rāma are : Bhaktasarvasva (Everything to the devotee), Jaganmañgalādhāra (The benefactor of the World or creation), Mahākīrtikīrtanīya (One who achieved fame), Śāntisampanna (The one having serenity), Tapasvivrinda le Vandya (Worshipped by the Sages), Rājanītigna (Politician), Vīra (Brave), Yuddhanītijña (Military Tactician).

Pandit Leknath has pictured Rāma sometimes as a human being and sometimes as the divine God. He has presented Kaikeyī in an unfavourable light. He says :

> 'When Rāma with Sītā, was going on exile Kaikeyī gave him and Sītā very old garments.
>
> Rāma put on those old clothes but Sītā only accepted them.'

Here Kaikeyī is shown as a spiteful and heartless woman.

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The Rāvaṇa of poet Lekhnath does not get a sympathetic treatment as in the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* or the Bhānubhakta *Rāmāyaṇa*. These latter have said that Rāvaṇa was a wise king and the evil in him emerged when he kidnapped Sītā.

The poet has not tried to give either his Rāma or his *Rāmāyaṇa Sār* a modern context. There is nothing new in this book as far as the theme or approach is concerned and it did not get the same fame as the Bhānubhakta *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Ādarśa Rāghava*. The poet has only tried to picture the story of Rāma's life in brief; but he has sometimes tried to depict life in contemporary Nepālī society. This was the foundation for the lasting fame of Bhānubhakta's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Just as there is a quality of Bhānubhakta in his Rāmāyaṇa, poet Lekhnath's *Rāmāyaṇa Sār* also bears the author's distinctive stamp.

Both Bhānubhakta and Lekhnath have included a few ślokas of the *Rāmagītā* in the Uttarakāṇḍa of their respective Rāmāyaṇas. But while Bhānubhakta has explained the Vedānta philosophy of the ślokas in easy and simple language, Lekhnath's wide reading has come into operation and he explains it in Sanskritised language that is difficult for the ordinary people to understand. However, it emerges from 'Mero Rāma' that Lekhnath is also a follower of the Advaita School of Vedānta philosophy.

It is probable that Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyaṇa has influenced poet Lekhnath in his 'Mero Rāma'. Lekhnath has used only one metre, Sragdharā, throughout his book while Bhānubhakta has used it in a few stanzas only. Although there is an equality in the poetic genius, it is Bhānubhakta who has secured a soft corner in the hearts of even the ordinary Nepālī-speaking people, while Pandit Lekhnath's appeal, like that of Pandit Somnath Sigdel, is limited to the intellectuals. This is because he had a wide knowledge of Sanskrit poetics and was himself a scholar and this has made his Rāmāyaṇa more complex. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Bhānubhakta is closer to the Nepālī people because it is closer to the simple Nepālī life in every aspect.

Conclusion

From this analysis of Rāmāyaṇa-tradition in Nepālī-literature it is established that all the four main Rāmāyaṇas in Nepālī, that

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is the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Sundarananda and of Bhānubhakta, *Ādarśa Rāghava* by Pandit Somnath Sigdel and *Mero Rāma* by Pandit Lekhnath Sharma, have been influenced mainly by the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. However, we find that other versions of the Rāmāyaṇa have also been translated or transcreated into Nepālī in recent times.

Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa

This also has its place in Nepālī literature. In Nepālī this Rāmāyaṇa was written by Pandit Rāmakanta Baral in 1882 A.D. In some verses Sītā is shown laying violent hands on Rāvaṇa. This is very different from the traditional image of Sītā suffering in silence. The whole Rāmāyaṇa is not as yet available in printed form.

Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa

The nine cantos of this Rāmāyaṇa have been translated into Nepālī verse by Pandit Bhojraj Sharma in 1901 A.D. The story of Rāma's leaving Sītā is given. Sītā's oath-taking, the appearance of Goddess Earth (Prithvī Devī) to take away Sītā and the anger of Rāma which frightened her so that she returned Sītā to Rāma. Then come Vivāhakāṇḍa, Rājyakāṇḍa, Manoharakāṇḍa and Pūrṇakāṇḍa. It seems that besides the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, the wonderful stories from the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* are also liked by Nepālī people. Some verses of this volume are published in 'Buingal' (page 155).

Uttara-rāmacarita

This is the Sanskrit work written by an ancient Sanskrit poet Bhavabhūti. Pandit Kalidas Parajuli (1881-1950 A.D.) has translated it into Nepālī verses.

Indeed, the Rāmāyaṇa tradition in Nepālī literature is not dead. This is borne out by the fact that many 'Rāma-Kathās' or stories about Rāma have been written in modern literature. Some noteworthy ones are mentioned below.

Rādheshyām Rāmāyaṇa

This is another Rāmāyaṇa which has appeared in the Rāmāyaṇa-literature of the Nepālī people. The poet is Śrī

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Khadga Bahadur Shrestha (1872-1945). He was a Governor but has also written many books of verse, according to Śrī Kamal Dikshit.[26] The *Rādheyshyām Rāmāyaṇa* was written by him in 1933 and at that time only the Bālakāṇḍa was published. The whole Rāmāyaṇa was later published in 1945 at Kathmandu. In some portions of the Bālakāṇḍa of this Rāmāyaṇa, we notice a similarity with the *Rāmacaritmānasa*, especially in the description of the first meeting of Sītā and Rāma. This is something new because the *Rāmacaritamānasa* has previously not been an important influence on the Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī.

Rāghava-Vilāp

By Pandit Taranath Sharma (born in 1887) is based on the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*. The incident related is Rāma's grief when Lakṣmaṇa is shot with the Śakti by Meghanāda. He (Lakṣmaṇa) becomes unconscious and there was no hope of his living. On seeing the condition of his younger brother Rāma begins to lament and says—

I am not aware that I have knowingly committed any sin.
Yet without sin there can be no suffering.
Oh, what have I done, what sin have I committed,
Which has resulted in this disaster?
Oh Jāmbavān, you are aged and wise.
I have lost my sense and am distracted.
Tell me, is there any way? Is it possible?
Please save my brother Lakṣmaṇa by some method.

Agniveśa Rāmāyaṇa

This is another Rāmāyaṇa in Nepālī. This volume is composed by Pandit Reotiraman Neopaniya (1876-1943). He had also translated some Kāṇḍas of the Tulasī *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Agniveśa Rāmāyaṇa* is not printed yet. The *Vivāha Līlā* which was written by this poet in 1911 is the chapter based on the Laṅkākāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The language of the volume is polished and rhetorical. The author has used in this piece of

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26 *Buingal.*

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poetry, the favourite metre of the old Hindi poets called 'Kavitta'.

The Rāmāyaṇa of Tulasīdāsa

This was also translated into Nepālī prose by Pandit Kulchandra Gautam of Vārāṇasī. In this book Pandit Kulchandra (1875-1938) has given explanation of the verses, many notes on the stories concerned, a short biography of Goswami Tulasīdāsa, the glory of Śrī Rāma and the technique of Rāmāyaṇa recitation.

Rāmāśvamedha Kāṇḍa

This was written by Subba Homnath Khatiwada (1854-1927). He had first published his *Rāmāśvamedha* as the eighth canto of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Bhānubhakta.

Besides these volumes *Vaigyānik Rāmāyaṇa Rāmāyaṇ ko Balun* by Purna Prasad Sharma and *Sītā-Haran* by poet Lakshmi Prasad Doekota are works that have kept up the Rāmāyaṇa-tradition in Nepālī literature.

Being a sovereign Hindu Kingdom, Nepal has kept the Rāmāyaṇa-tradition. Sītā is revered in Nepal because she is regarded as a daughter of Nepal Rājā Janak, king of Mithilā, had his capital near what is now modern Janakpur in Nepal. Therefore, Jānakī is worshipped annually during Dussehra. Rāmalīlā is also staged during Dussehra, which is the most important Nepālī festival held to celebrate Rāma's victory.

The Nepālīs are very attached to this great epic. To a great extent, the society of modern Nepal follows the same tradition presented in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is still held true that a son's duty is to obey his father unquestioningly and a brother's to honour his elder brother. The wife's duty is to her husband to whom she must be faithful. The character of Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata have a nobility and appeal that is universal. The Rāmāyaṇa strengthens the faith in the omnipotence of God and serves as a source of the ideals of even the simplest villager who has heard the tales of the Rāmāyaṇa from the lips of others.

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3. Sanskriti ke Char Adhyāy—R.S. Dinkar (Patna).

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN SINHALA LITERATURE and ITS FOLK VERSION

By J. TILAKASIRI

It is indeed remarkable that ever since the Rāma saga migrated to the countries of South and South-East Asia it has not merely enriched the cultural and literary heritage of every country which came under its spell but inculcated lasting ethical and religious values among the people. When the epic swept through the cultures of Asian countries its episodes, characters and even descriptive motifs had a varied influence on the different countries, each of which interpreted or adapted the story to suit its social milieu.

In many Asian countries the Rāmāyaṇa theme has had a special appeal particularly because the Characterisation of the principal hero, Rāma, his wife, Sītā, and their companions and even their retinue, bears a humane and refined outlook on life. The principal events of the epic are located in Ayodhyā, the capital of the Kosala Kingdom, in the North of India.

In Śrī Laṅkā, the story of Rāma and Sītā has continued to be popular among the literati and the people in general from the time it became known. But it must be emphasized, however, that ambivalent attitudes towards the theme and the characterisation of the heroes have prevailed and these are reflected in the literature of the Sinhalese and in the religious cults, legends and folk-lore of the island.

The Sinhala language, belonging to the Indo-Āryan family, has leaned heavily on Sanskrit and Pāli for its vocabulary, syntax and grammatical forms. During the earliest phase of literary activity the necessity to furnish commentaries to the Pāli scriptures, brought from India, produced a mixed style in which the Sinhalese idiom was interspersed with Pāli words and phrases. Simultaneous with the use of Pāli, the language of orthodox Buddhist schools, Sanskrit, too, came to be introduced to the country by other opposing schools of Buddhist thought. The Sinhala literature, therefore, reflects in its development,

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characteristic features produced by the linguistic and literary tendencies of both those classical languages.

In the earliest literary epoch the Sinhala writers attempted to popularise through their works the ideas and aims promulgated by the Buddhist *Jātaka* stories and the legends connected with the Pāli scriptures. Sinhalese poetry, written during that time, uses unrhymed verse of the type called (*gīti,*) (Sansk.) corresponding to the *āryā* type of metre) and although a poem composed in that style often selects as its theme the past birth story (Jātaka) of an aspirant Buddha, the narrative is presented in the style of the Sanskrit kāvya. The prescriptions of the Mahākāvya style as regards conventional descriptions of the city, court-life, seasons, sun-set, water-sports, and other topics are so closely followed in such poems as the *Sasada* (Śaśajātaka), *Mudvadovda* (Makhadevajātaka) and the *Kavsilumina* (based on the Kuśajātaka) that it is impossible not to infer that Sanskrit models of kāvya as well as Sanskrit theoretical concepts influenced them considerably. This is further confirmed by the early appearance, in the history of Sinhala literature, of the *Siyabaslakara* (Poetics of Sinhala), which is in fact a Sinhala version of the famous manual of poetics, the *Kāvyādarśa*, and also of works on Sinhalese prosody such as *Elusandaslakana* ('Characteristics of Sinhala Metre').

Particularly mention should be made of the *Kavsilumina* ('Crest Jewel of Poetry') considered the best poem in Sinhala literature, where the author, King Parākramabāhu II, has used all the devices of the ornate mahākāvya style (including the pedantic *śabdālaṅkāras* and metric *citrabandha* structures) in conformity with the established mode of composition. He also develops the theme of King Kuśa and the princess Prabhāvatī, in the prescribed romantic manner, emulating Sanskrit poets. Although the themes were Buddhistic and the aims of the poetry didactic it was the fashion to use the Sanskrit kāvya style mainly because the study of Sanskrit and its literature enjoyed great prestige from the 10th century onwards. Although direct references are not made to the Sanskrit epic compositions it is evident that the prototype of the Sanskrit kāvya and the motifs as furnished by the literary tradition commencing with the *Rāmāyaṇa* (as the Ādikāvya) had begun to exercise the same influence on Sinhala poetry as on classical Sanskrit poetry. As Sinhala poetry borrowed the structures and types from the

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developed form as found in the works of later Sanskrit poets, the formative stages of the growth are not clearly seen.

Yet, the strong Buddhist convictions of the Sinhalese literati and their obvious attraction to Buddhist themes continued to prevent the epic stories or characters being used for literary purposes. The writings of Buddhist scholiasts was mainly responsible for this aversion and the Sinhalese poets of later times followed their attitude of indifference towards the Sanskrit epics which were quite well-known in the island. Buddhaghoṣa, the famous Pāli commentator, who came to Śrī Laṅkā from S. India, in the early part of the 5th century A.D. rejects the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* as 'frivolous stories' (sampapphalapa).[1] The author of the *Kāvya Śekharaya*, dismisses them as fabrications[2], obviously viewing the themes as coming from heretical sources, injurious to Buddhist sentiment.

It is consistent with the development of literary style and poetical traditions dating from the earliest times that Sanskrit poetry, too, had been assiduously cultivated. Royal patronage and authorship promoted a high standard of achievement and it is therefore not surprising to find the *Jānakīharaṇa* of King Kumāradāsa reckoned as one of the Sanskrit poems which was profitably studied by all those who wished to gain access to Sanskrit poetry and acquire proficiency in the language. Its popularity is well attested by the quotations made from it in Sinhalese texts and the influence it appeared to have had on Sinhalese poets. In 1891, venerable Dharmārāma, a Buddhist scholar-monk edited the Sinhala paraphrase to the poem and published the re-constructed text on the basis of the *Jānakīharaṇasannaya*[3] (*sanne* meaning 'paraphrase' or 'gloss' in Sinhalese). These manuscripts of the word-for-word gloss of 14 cantos and a few verses of the 15th canto of the Sanskrit peom

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1 '*Bhāratayuddha-Sītāharaṇādiniratthakathāpurekkharata, tāthārūpika-thākathanan ca*'. (Frivolous talk) consisting of pre-occupation with useless narrative such as the (themes of) 'war of the Bharatas' and 'abduction of Sītā' and other narratives of a similar nature, *Papancasûdanī* (P.T.S. edn.) Part I, p. 201. See also D. Pannasara, *Sanskrit Literature Extant Among the Sinhalese*, pp. 18-23.

2 *Kāvyaśekhara*, IX, 35.

3 *Jānakīharaṇasannaya*, ed. Dharmārāma (1891). See also C.E. Godakumbura, *Sinhalese Literature* (1955), p. 141.

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(then available) demonstrates that the *Jānakīharaṇa* was a *mahākāvya* of acknowledged merit, preserved in the island, accurately interpreted and rendered into Sinhala in a style befitting the original so that the absence of the usual Sanskrit commentary accompanying the poem was hardly felt. The complete text of the poem, running into 20 cantos, has now been edited[4], with the help of a South Indian manuscript, containing the original poem and written in Malayalam characters, belonging to the late M. Rāmakrishna Kavi.

The name given to the poem attests the popularity of the 'abduction' theme of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Śrī Laṅkā. It is significant that this is the earliest Ceylonese poem in Sanskrit which takes its theme from the *Rāmāyaṇa* but emphasising the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa as would be appropriate for a composition made here.

Not only the poem, but its author, also, King Kumāradāsa, has been eulogised in several places in the extant literature of Śrī Laṅkā and references have also been made to him by several early Indian and Sinhala writers who have mentioned the strong bonds of friendship that had existed between him and the celebrated poet Kālidāsa, a loyal friend of his. A tradition, recorded in the Sinhala literature, alludes to Kumāradāsa, as having sacrificed his life for the sake of his friend Kālidāsa who had been murdered at the hands of a courtesan.[5] Kumāradāsa's date has been questioned although he has been identified with King Kumāradhātusena who reigned in Ceylon during 517-526 A.D. Whatever the historicity of the allusions made to the two poets and their connexion, it is clear that Kumāradāsa was one of the eminent poets of the kāvya tradition, not second to Kālidāsa in his mastery of language and poetic diction.

The Sinhala literature of the later periods does not seem to have paid any special attention to the Rāma story but respectfully mentions the traditional Purāṇic and epic lore, as the repository of myths and legends. The *Sandeśa* poems of the Sinhalese, which were modelled on a *sandeśa kāvya* prototype,

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[4] *Jānakīharaṇa* of Kumāradāsa, ed. S. Paranavitana and C.E. Godakumbura (1967).

[5] *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. li-liii.

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furnished by the *Meghadūta*, allude to the Rāma legend as a well-known theme. The two poems of the Kotte period of Sinhala literature, in the 15th century A.D., the *Guttila Kāvya*[6] (a poem based on the story of the Bodhisattva born as a musician named Guttila) and the *Gira Sandesaya*[7] (The Parrot Messenger) contain allusions to the Rāma-Sītā story as being increasingly popular among the people. This is an evident contrast with the attitude of earlier Buddhist writers, who in their desire to propagate Buddhism and uphold its teachings, showed little interest in the epic poems of India. But the renewed interest in the theme arose as the poets were not merely content with adapting *Jātaka* stories but epic myths and legends as well for poetry and drama. In the Kandyan period of literature, from the 16th century onwards, the epic story became even more popular among the writers who began to use versions for compositions of a popular character.

In the early part of the 19th century poetical versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, known by such titles as *Rāvaṇa Kathavakavi*[8] (poetry dealing with Rāvaṇa's story) and a later poem of 330 verses, *Rāvaṇa-yuddha*)[9] were brought out. These works dealt with Rāvaṇa's role in the story as it was of significance to the Sinhala readers of Laṅkā.

After the middle of the 19th century, in the wake of the interest created in the new style of theatre, then in vogue, called *nurtiya,* which owed a great deal to Parsee musicals, Sinhalese writers and dramatists showed a great interest in the classical Sanskrit poems and dramas. They were looking for new themes for compositions. At this stage it is believed that Tamil versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* probably influenced Sinhala writers.[10] The Tamil version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, composed by Kamban (The *Kamba Rāmāyaṇa*) is cited in Sinhala translation of a part of it, made by Jerenimus Abhayagunawardhana, in 1841.[11] C. Don Bastian, an editor and publisher, brought out a Sinhala translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which is considered by the critics

6 *Guttilakāvya*, ed. Batuwantudawe, p. 331.
7 *Girasandesaya*, ed., Malansuriya, v. 214.
8 C. E. Godakumbura, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
9 K.R. Perera, *Rāvaṇayuddhaya* (1902).
10 P. B. Sannasgala, *Sinhala Sāhitya Vamsaya* (1964), p. 557.
11 Godakumbura, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

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to have a decisive influence on the development of the Sinhala novel.[12] John de Silva, a lawyer and an outstanding playwright of the same period, contributed even more than Don Bastin to the development of Sinhala theatre by improving the *nuritya* plays with borrowings from both classical North Indian music and Sanskrit dramatic conventions. He wrote several plays in Sinhalese, adapting famous dramas such as *Śākuntalā, Ratnavālī* and *Nāgānanda*. The *Rāmāyaṇa*[13] was also used as the theme of another play of his while the *Uttararāmacarita* was a direct adaptation from the original Sanskrit text. The efforts of these pioneer dramatists who used the epic themes and Sanskrit dramatic models inspired many a later dramatist to make further adaptations not only from Indian sources but from European plays as well.

A Pāli version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is also assigned to the Kundyan period. It is supposed to have been written by a monk named Sumangala and entitled *Rāmasandesa.*[14] Using elegent Pāli stanzas, the author addresses the message to God Rāma in the form of Viṣṇu at Rāmadevala (Rāma-shrine) in Hanguranketa (near Kandy), praying to the god to bless the king, Śrī Vikrama Rājasiṅgha.

At this stage we may consider an important feature connected with the transmission of epic stories from country to country. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, like the great epics of other lands, represents both an oral and a literary tradition. It is the oral tradition which had a lasting and more wide-spread influence on the cultural patterns of the countries to which the saga was carried by travellers and traders from India in the course of their adventures. The basic elements of the story—a good king and his loyal queen estranged by the wily machinations of an enemy king of a foreign land, rescued and re-united by the hero's counter-attack with the assistance of monkey-hordes—offered all the ingredients of bravery, adventure and sacrifice packed into a conflict between the forces of good and evil to be adpated into the themes of the oral folk tradition on which the later epic versions were based.

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[12] E.R. Saracchandra, *The Folk Drama of Ceylon*, (1956), p. 131.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[14] G.P. Malalasekera, *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, (1958), pp. 288ṇ2-89.

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In South India, in particular, the vernacular epic versions were based on oral traditions of the story and it is in all probability due to Śrī Laṅkā's familiarity with such versions as a result of commercial and cultural exchanges that the interest in the *Rāmāyaṇa* was rekindled. The transmission of such legends enriched the folklore of Śrī Laṅkā, too, and the manner in which the original story has been interpolated into a semi-historical legend of the land, referred to in more than one source[15], illustrates how the adaptation of the Rāma story has imparted a special relevance to the whole legend.

A ritual dance performed in honour of God Kohomba, called the *Kohomba Kankariya*, confined to the hill country of the island contains an interesting legend, viz., the story of 'King of the Flower' (*Maleraja Kathawa*). This ritual is important for two reasons, firstly because the ceremonial and ritualistic dances associated with the *Kankariya* were the source of what is now celebrated as the *Kandyan Dance* and, secondly, because of the inclusion of a version of the Rāma legend under the title of *Kohombadeviyange Utpatti-kathava*[16] (the story of the birth of God Kohomba) in the main story of the ceremony. The legend is elaborated further and even corroborated by a version[17] found in a village in the Kandy District which narrates that Viṣṇu (in his incarnation as Rāma) was compelled to forsake Sītā, his queen, owing to a malefic planetary influence. While he spent several years in the forest, Rāvaṇa carried away Sītā to Laṅkā. After refusing to yield to him she reluctantly agreed to grant his request at the end of the period of her chastity.

After seven years Rāma returned and roamed the forest in search of Sītā. Then he made an alliance with Vālin, who

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[15] *Rājāvaliya, Kuveni asna, Sihaba asna, Maleraja kathava* (Sinhalese historical and ritual texts of the Kandyan period) refer to the legend of King 'Malaya' of 'Māle' (Flower), who had been enticed to Laṅkā to cure King Panduvasudeva's illness by the performance of the exorcistic ceremony called 'Kohombayakkhama'. See also Saracchandra, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

[16] 'Kohomba Kankariya'—A traditional folk ritual in the hill country of Sri Laṅkā (Ceylon), *Paranavitana Commemoration Volume* (in the Press), Godakumbura, *Kohomba kankariya* (1963), Introduction.

[17] C. E. Godakumbura, "The Rāmāyaṇa"—a version of Rāma's story from Ceylon, JRAS (GB) (1946), pp. 14-22.

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promised to find her if his wife was also recovered. Vālin obtained his wife with Viṣṇu's help and with the ability to walk on the sea and be immune from fire and arrows—three boons he had been granted—he crossed over to Laṅkā. He could not be captured easily by Rāvaṇa's guards and when his tail was set on fire he used the opportunity to burn the city by jumping on to the rooftops. In the ensuing confusion he carried back Sītā to Viṣṇu. Sītā then became enceinte.

The legend, as narrated locally, differs from this point onwards from the original story. It sets forth that when Viṣṇu left Sītā and went to attend a meeting of the Gods, Umā visited her and in the course of conversation asked her to describe the form of Rāvaṇa, which she did by sketching his figure on a leaf of an ashplantain tree. For fear of being discovered with the drawing when Viṣṇu returned she threw it under the bed, but Rāvaṇa's power vitalised the figure and the bed quaked. On peeping under the bed Viṣṇu saw the drawing. In a rage he ordered that Sītā be killed in the Himālayan forest but in reality she was spared, though reported as killed.

Then Sītā, who was abandoned in the forest, was at last found by Vālamiga (Vālmīki), who provided her with the necessary protection. Eventually she gave birth to a son. One day during her absence the child fell from the bed and began to scream and the sage, unwilling to touch him, threw a lotus on to the bed and it forthwith became a child. Seeing two sons on her return, Sītā was confused as regards the identity of her own son. Going to the sage for help she received his explanation, but remained unconvinced, and finally requested him to create another child. In response to her request she produced a third child with a blade of grass.

When all the three boys grew up they left their mother and went to the Malaya country where they lived happily in separate places known by their names as Sandalindu, Mala and Kitsiri.

In the later part of the story an attempt has been made to change the content and transform the characters to a form compatible with local tradition and to fit it into an existing legend. It is also noteworthy that the authentic part of the story of Rāma has not been altered, but the portion dealing with the

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event recorded in the so-called spurious section, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*[18], has been freely adapted.

The Kohomba legend also shows how the deified heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were assimilated into the folk religion and also invested with Buddhist traits. Rāma's identification with Viṣṇu is, therefore, significant and as the protector of Buddhism, he holds a high position in popular mythology. In the legend it is further stated that Viṣṇu sent the three Malaya brothers to Laṅkā to cure King Panduvasdeva of his illness. This statement has been interpreted to mean that Rāma as Viṣṇu sent his three sons to Laṅkā for this purpose. King Malaya, born of a blue lotus, has to be identified as a son of Viṣṇu (Rāma) whose colour is blue. Kitsiri, born of sacrificial grass (*kuśa* grass) has to be identified as Kuśa, a twin son of Rāma, and Sandalindu, as the son born to Sītā by Viṣṇu.[19]

The folk religion of the Buddhists of Śrī Laṅkā had at all times been subjected to the influence of religious cults and with increasing intercourse between the two countries. The sectarian faiths, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, associated with Hinduism, have left their mark on the changing form of popular Buddhism as practised here. Viṣṇu worship has become exceedingly popular and even today every Buddhist temple has a shrine dedicated to the deity. In the mediaeval period of the island's history it was prevalent and in the 15th and 16th centuries, also, Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu was incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon, thereby enhancing the prestige of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Kokila Sandesaya*[20] refers to a Rāma-temple in Jaffna. Thus Rāma-worship also became popular in due course and perhaps the ordinary people looked upon Rāma not merely as the incarnation of a deity but as the protector, who vanquished the forces of evil. In the same way Vibhīṣaṇa (the Dreadful) who did not approve of the hostile acts of his brother Rāvaṇa, and in fct joined Rāma, who also transformed and earned a special position as a deity, revered by the Buddhists of the island. He was installed as the king of Laṅkā by Rāma on Rāvaṇa's death.

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18 M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I (1927), pp. 493-495.

19 A. Seneviratna, *op. cit.*

20 *Kokila Sandesaya*, v. 225.

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The *Salalihini Sandesaya* has been written with the purpose of conveying a message carried by a starling *(salalihini)* to God Vibhīṣaṇa in Kelaniya (a few miles from Colombo). This god is particularly invoked for his beneficence and readiness to grant the wishes of his supplicants.

The fascination of the people for the Rāma-story can also be accounted for geographically. First and foremost, the events of the latter part of the Rāmāyaṇa narrative are set in Laṅkā and Rāvaṇa was the ruler of the island, vanquished by the hero, Rāma, and secondly, the proximity of Laṅkā to the Indian sub-continent to which it is said to have been connected in pre-historic times gave to the story and its events a natural colouring. It is in the folk culture of the island, however, that Rāma and Sītā are still revered as the ideal types of hero and heroine, respectively, embodying all that is good and true in human character. This admiration for them is irrespective of their Indian origin and is recognition of common cultural values which even tend to look down upon Laṅkā indigenous ruler, Rāvaṇa, as deserving his fate.

There is, of course, a certain school of thought which has prersisted to this day that sees in Rāvaṇa, the exemplar of a brave indigenous Sinhala hero, who withstood the might of the Indian attack on the country—an obvious distortion of the accepted orthodox version of the story. Among such enthusiastic supporters of the Rāvaṇa-legend the belief is firm that Rāvaṇa was proficient in several arts and sciences, such as music, both in its theory ad practice, medicine and in healing diseases. He is supposed to have composed several musical pieces (rāgas), written medical text-books and his name is associated with the instrument called *Rāvaṇa Vīṇā*.[21]

The rustic folk of Laṅkā, relishing the romantic flavour of the Rāma-story, have transmitted it in their traditional lore, showing a high regard for particular episodes of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, located in Laṅkā, and considering names such as Laṅkā, Sītā, Hanumān and Rāvaṇa, hallowed for their legendary and semi-historical associations with local places. It is in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that we come across the ancient name for the island, *Laṅkā*. It

[21] C. de S. Kulatilaka, *Laṅkāve Samgīta Sambhavaya* (1974), pp. 38-39.

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is believed from traditional accounts that ancient Laṅkā, as known to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, was much more extensive than Laṅkā as it exists today, and that after Rāvaṇa's death the island was reduced in size as a result of physical changes. The word *Laṅkā* is taken to mean 'an island' according to some[22], its literal meaning 'tall or high' signifying the elevated situation of the land. But the usual meanings attached to the word are 'resplendent', 'delightful', 'adorned', etc. Book V of the *Rāmāyaṇa* contains such a romantic description of the scenery, the palace and harem of Rāvaṇa that the canto is accordingly named "Beautiful Section" (*Sundara Kāṇḍa*).[23] Even allowing for the poetical flavour of the narrative it is possible to think of the account as reflecting conditions generally prevalent in a picturesque land such as Laṅkā. It may also be mentioned that this ancient name now restored and used officially) was also used by some of the country's later conquerors, as for example the Portuguese who rendered it as *Lanca, Lancao* or *Lancas.*[24]

Laṅkā's folk-lore and history are studded with significant anecdotes drawn from the main story. Several place-names in Ceylon used from ancient times still recall the connexion of the island with the hero and heroine. *Sītāvaka* has acquired legendary and historical interest. It is believed to be the jungle fortress to which Sītā was carried by Rāvaṇa. Recent history recognises it as a "fortress where revolts took place, a capital of kings, a sheltering place for English troops"—but now the old site is hardly recognisable and grown up into a new town known as Avissawella.[25] *Sītā talava* or 'plain of Sītā', has acquired that name because it is believed that the heroine was concealed together with Rāvaṇa's neice at the spot. Other place-names like *Sītā Koṇḍe*, *Sītā eliya* and *Rāvaṇa alla* (named after the former precincts of Rāvaṇa's pleasure garden) also echo the various episodes in the Rāma-story located in Laṅkā. The region

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22 Ramdas G., 'Aboriginal Names in the Rāmāyaṇa' in *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society,* Vol. XI (1928), pp. 41-42.

23 M. Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

24 L. Nell, "Laṅkā", (Reproduced from Ceylon Miscellany) *Orientalist* Vol. II, pp. 27-33.

25 H. White, "Sītāvaka and Its Vicinity" in *Orientalist*, Vol. II, pp. 33-37.

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of Kotmale is also associated with many a legend concerning Rāvaṇa and Sītā. The Aśoka grove where Sītā spent her time is believed to have been located there.

Another humorous episode alludes to Hanumān's feat in transporting a huge mountain full of all medicinal herbs for treating the moneky-soldiers maimed in battle. When Laṅkā's inhabitants refused to give the monkeys herbs, Hanumān leapt back to India, enraged, lifted this mountain along and deposited it, according to some, near Galle (at Rumassala) or, according to others, near Kurunegala. Many such folk tales and legends are prevalent in various parts of the island rendering the *Rāmāyaṇa* story evergreen in their memory, a treasure-house for spining out stories to entertain and edify the listeners.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA and ITS IMPACT ON GUJARATI LITERATURE

By UMASHANKAR JOSHI

As far as the poetic world in Indian languages is concerned, Vālmīki is the path-finder. Though the poets of the various Indian languages have, through the ages, drawn heavily and almost lived upon the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa, who is said to have forestalled them all ('Vyāsocchiṣṭam jagat sarvan'), the honour of being the pioneer in the field is universally accorded to Vālmīki.

Vālmīki, on all hands, is the Ādikavi—the first among poets, for, as the legend says, it was he on whose lips the first śloka, a couplet in verse, was born when he chanced to see one of the crane-couple being shot by a hunter's arrow. The anuṣṭubh metre that Vālmīki spontaneously uttered could not have any claim to novelty as it is formed by adding an extra fourth line to the three lines of the Gāyatrī metre used in the Vedas and is found in the Vedas themselves. We have to look somewhere else for what the legend aims at emphasising as phenomenal in the emotional and cultural life of the people. The stanza, which Vālmīki finds himself the author of, is very unlike-indeed it is qualitatively unlike—the Vedic hymns. The pre-occupation of the Vedas is with the religious, metaphysical, philosophical, mystic and spiritual aspects of human life, while Vālmīki's utterance is an expression of fellow-feeling, that of concern for a fellow-creature. This is 'śoka'—sorrow being transformed into 'śloka'—a poetic utterance, as the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself and, following it, Kālidāsa obseverd. Vālmīki's utterance heralds the beginning of the aesthetic use of the word. The Vedic word was heard. No doubt, Vālmīki's first stanza was, as Valery would describe 'une ligne donnee',—one line given. However, the whole work of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which he gave after the symbol in the stanza had taken possession of his total consciousness was not heard, was composed by him. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, being, thus the first poem interested in the delineation of human sentiments—and the poet takes care to

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emphasize in the encounter with Nārada at the very outset that he would like to sing of an 'nara', a man,—Vālmīki is hailed as the Ādikavi, the first among poets, who revel in putting the word to aesthetic use, whose work stands or falls by its capacity to transform feeling into 'rasa'—aesthetic comprehension. This is not to say that the Vedic hymns are devoid of aesthetic charm or the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other poems should be devoid of, say, religious appeal. In short, what the legend regarding Vālmīki's spontaneuous outbrust at the killing of the crane seeks to do is to make a sharp distinction between the Vedic word, the bearer of Truth, as heard by the sages, and the word, transforming feeling into 'rasa'—*i.e.*, aesthetic experience. This is perhaps what Bhavabhūti meant when he described Vālmīki's outburst as 'the birth of a new metre, different from the Vedas'. The appeal of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is predominantly through its 'rasa', which entitles Vālmīki to be called the Ādikavi.

Why Vālmīki is looked upon as Ādikavi can be rightly and fully understood if we visualize the circumstances in which he produced his work, with no model before him whatsoever. He stood at the confluence of cultures. Civilizations were interacting on one another. For all we know Vālmīki belonged to the indigenous people of this land. It was given to an indigenous person to attempt to assess the epoch. The lineaments of an abiding pattern, that his poetic genius could see emerging from a cultural turmoil were those of family relationships—for example, relationships of father and son, brother and brother, wife and husband. Vālmīki could see clearly that the strength of the Aryans who had invaded the land and settled down as rulers lay mainly in their ideal family relationships. He pointed out, for example, the shabby treatment Vāli and Sugrīva, two brothers, gave each other in contrast to the twin relationships Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata established gracefully and at a great personal sacrifice, with their elder brother Rāma. He also underlined the fact how Tārā was taken as a wife by the husband's brother, while Lakṣmaṇa, when asked to identify Sītā's ornaments, said that he did not know what sort of bracelets or earrings she wore and that he could recognize only the anklets as he was accustomed to bow daily at her feet. Vālmīki did not hesitate to criticise what was amiss in the Aryan society as well. When Kaikeyī in her desperate bid to remove Rāma from Ayodhyā was all anger and resentment,

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Daśaratha entered her apartment. The poet's words are : 'Sa vṛdhastarunīm bhāryām... dadarśa dharaṇītale'—the old man saw the young wife prostrate on the floor. The 'old-young' contrast forewarns the reader against any optimistic outcome. Rāma's taking to one wife is held out as a silent commentary on his polygamous father's plight as a husband. In fact, the whole poem centres round the conjugal love of Rāma and Sītā and even when for purposes of the state of Sītā is exiled, Rāma is shown performing the sacrificial rites with the golden image of Sītā as his partner. Indeed, in spite of the various trials and tribulations through which they two have to pass, 'the heart does know the mutual affection' (Hṛdayam tveva jānāti prītiyogam parasparam). Vālmīki, the deeply human and humane anchorite, knows fully well and wants to emphasize the supreme value of love. This he achieves by a delicate manipulation of Sanskrit grammar. Sanskrit has a 'dual' form also. Two hearts would be 'hṛdaye'. The poet eschews 'hṛdaye'. He uses the singular form 'hṛdayam'. Two persons, one heart,—this is what the poet conveys so suggestively.

Vālmīki's genius took into its purview all the types of personal relationships that prevailed in the society of his day and set forth, in a grand poetic version, ideal characters that have captivated the mind and soul of India and of other lands as well for centuries. Vālmīki was a judicious witness of, and not a participant in, the struggles of his day. Who else could have stood in such good stead to the royal house of Ayodhyā, when the pregnant queen had to be exiled by a loving husband? For, was it not Vālmīki, the forest-dwelling sage, who gave asylum to the queen in the hour of her crisis which was no less physical than spiritual?

The *Rāmāyaṇa* has a structural simplicity and a well-knit unity. It has an air of sweetness about it, and at the same time it is suffesed with a tender pathos. The vision is at once homely and immeasurably elevated. No wonder it has indelibly imprinted on the consciousness of India a galaxy of immortal characters through the ages. Rarely has a poem contributed to much towards the strengthening of the spiritual fibres of a whole people,—shall I say peoples?

The poets of the various Indian languages have vied with one another in presenting material from the *Rāmāyaṇa,* as also from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata*. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa

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have always come handy for the expression of all the three voices—lyrical, narrative and dramatic. The Gujarati poets also have availed of this opportunity with considerable poetic gain.

To make a personal reference, the longest Gujarati poem I read in early boyhood was *Rāmāyaṇa* written by the Poet Girdhar. An illiterate relative of mine, would come to me whenever he could steal an hour from his farm-work and make me recite portions from it. Another old man, a sort of a musician, who paid short visits to his house in the village, made me sing portions of the poem and would himself play on the 'tabla' as I sang. That was just the time when I was myself feeling the stir of the creative spirit within me and I felt very excited over finding more than eleven words for the 'horse' in the poem. I often caught myself actually repeating those words and re-counting them. I must confess to-day that Girdhar's *Rāmacaritra*, which draws freely on *Hanumān-nāṭaka*, *Padmapurāṇa* and *Agnipurāṇa* besides Vālmīki, is poetically not so rich. It is rather placid and staid, rarely rising to imaginative height. But it is popular and is widely read even today. Till the fifties one could find a 'Mana-Bhaṭṭa' (usually a Brahmin, reciting a narrative keeping time on a 'mana', a metal pot, with his fingers which had rings on), reciting it in a city or a town or even a village.

Girdhar-*Rāmāyaṇa*, as it is popularly called, is not very old. It was written as late as 1837 A.D. Not that there were no full versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* attempted earlier. Nakar (1568), Kahan (1571) and Vishundas (1589) gave the complete Rāma-story in the 16th century. Somehow Girdhar's version in the modern language seems to have replaced the earlier ones.

For that matter the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as a work, has not had that magnetic appeal in Gujarat as it seems to have had in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. May be the influence of Jainism and of Vaiṣṇavism, especially after the advent of Śrīmad Vallabhācārya, are responsible for it. The great Gujarati poet, Narasimh Mehta, whose 'Vaishnav-jan to...' has become a sort of a national psalm because of it being a favourite with Mahatma Gandhi at his prayer meetings, poured out his passionate heart in matchless lyrics describing the love of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in the 15th century, a little before the birth of

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Vallabhācārya. Saurashtra and South Gujarat came under increasing influence of Vaiṣṇavism. Brāhmins and Kṣatriyas were mainly worshippers of Śiva and the Mother-Goddess, more especially in North Gujarat, and were more inclined to the worship of Rāma than that of Kṛṣṇa. Bhalan and Premanand, while writing on Kṛṣṇa's childhood usually aver to their allegiance to Rāma at the end of each piece. However, the written works in the Gujarati language during the centuries evince a preponderance of interest in the Kṛṣṇa-story than in the Rāma-story. Curiously enough Girdhar, a vaiśya, wrote his *Rāmacaritra* at the behest of Goswami Purushottam Maharaj, a Vallabhite.

Not that the Rāma-story or the main points of interest in it have not caught the imagination of the popular mind. To take first a few specimens from folk-songs, one comes across episodes from Rāma-story in the songs accompanying the Garba-dance of Gujarat. 'Kege (Kaikeyī) spoke in anger : Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa should go to the forest. The first forest Rāma left behind, they entered the second one.' And the song briskly proceeds to the hunting of the golden deer and Sītā's abduction. At the marriage ceremony the couples worshipped include those of Śiva-Pārvatī and Vasiṣṭha-Arundhatī but not of Rāma-Sītā. However, the ideal sung and impressed on the minds of the uniting couple is that of Rāma and Sītā. One of the marriage songs is about the banishment of Sītā and presents a simplified popular version of the tragic episode :

Queen Kausalyā at early morn asked for a green stick to brush her teeth.

She asked, she asked once again, the word did not reach Sītā's ear.

With a golden bowl in his hand, Rāmacandra was coming down the stair-case.

'My dear younger brother, O Lakṣmaṇa, build a house on the bank of the Jumna.

Send this woman Sītā there, Why did she not attend to mother's word?'

'O Husband! What's my fault? For what lapse of mine do you send me away?'

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'O lovely lady, you are like a garland over my heart, but why did you ignore mother's word?'

In 1305 A.D. Merutuṅga in his *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* quotes old Gujarati couplets which refer to the lord of Laṅkā by way of solace to Muñja. It is during the late 15th and early 16th century that one finds the whole of the Rāma-story or big chunks of it rendered into Gujarati : *Sītāharaṇ* by Karman Mantri (1470), *Rāmalīlā* by Bhim (1500) and *Rāvaṇa Mandodarī Samvād* by Shridhar (1509). *Rāmāyaṇa-Purāṇa* by Svambhūdev is still unpublished.

Some of the finest poetry in the language is to be found in the *Rāma Bāla Līlā* of Bhalan (late 15th and early 16th century), whose *magnum opus* is the masterly verse-rendering—perhaps the only one in any language—of Bāṇa's *Kādambarī*. Bhalan is an adept at giving pictures of child-life. He has also written a series of lyrics on the child Kṛṣṇa, but the series on Rāma's childhood has a freshness of portraiture and articulation all its own.

One of the incidents associated more with Rāma and Kausalyā than Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā and popular with Gujarati poets is that connected with the child's asking for the moon. It has become almost a folk-song :

Mother, the moon to me is dear.
Mother, put in in my pocket here.

The another is hard put to making the child stop crying. At long last she holds a bowl full of water and the child stops crying on having the moon, which is reflected in the water.

Bhalan's sons Uddhav and Vishnudas (early 16th century) gave *Rāmāyaṇa* in six Kāṇḍas. There is seen a spurt in the handling of the Rāma-story. Another Vishnudas, also author of *Rāmāyaṇa* in seven Kāṇḍas, drawing upon not only Vālmīki but also Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* and folk tradition, wrote in addition *Aṅgad Vishti* and *Lava-Kuśa-Ākhyān*. Other notable works are : *Rāma-vivāh* by Vaikuṇṭha (1584), *Hanumant-charit* by Shedhaji (1591), *Sītājino Sohlo* by Tulasi (1608), *Paraśurām-Ākhyān* by Shivdas (1612), *Meherāvan-Ākhyān* by Ranasut (1631), *Sītā-Svayamvar* by Hariram (1637), *Sītā-Svayamvar* by Viram-sut Hariram (1647), *Sītā-virah* by Haridas (1666).

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The Gujarati language owes quite a lot to the services rendered by Jain authors, some of whom have written about Rāma also. Of course, the Jain version of the Rāma-story, while adhering to the main events, differs substantially from Vālmīki's text regarding many details. The Gujarati Jain writers have before them the tradition of Vimala's Prakrit *Paumachariyu* and Hemachandra's account in the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣa Carita*, using the popular Rāma-story for propagating Jainistic ideals. Jain writings have been well preserved in the Grantha Bhāṇḍārs (libraries). This has made it possible for Gujarati, as observed by Sir George Grierson, to have specimens of writing denoting the changes in the language almost from decade to decade. Much of prose writing is also thus preserved. Devgaṇisūri's *Rāmacaritra* written in 1596 is in prose. Another prose rendering has been published from a manuscript dated 1617. Some of the outstanding Jain poems dealing with the Rāma-story are : *Rāvaṇa Mandodarī Samvād* by Muni Lāvaṇya Samaya, noted author of *Vimala-Prabandha* (1456), *Rāma-Rāsa* by Pandit Chandragani (1573), *Añjanāsundarī-Prabandh* by Gunashil (1606), *Sītārāma Rāsa* by Bālakavi (1629), *Aṅgad Vishti* by Kanak Sundar and *Rāmasita-Prabandh* by Samayasundara (early 17th century). More popular is *Rāmayaśorasāyara Rāsa* by Pandit Keshrajaji (1627). Jayasagar wrote *Sītāharaṇ* in 1721.

The Jainistic version, apart from being heavily laden with didactic and sectarian material is also sedate as it was usually presented to a predominantly religious audience in a closed hall. It could affort to be devoid of the element of entertainment. It is only in the work of masters like Samayasundar that the narrative provides some relief by flights of imagination. The non-Jainistic narrative compositions were presented normally at night in open court-yards and they were required to hold the audiences spell-bound by virtue of the quality of articulation and the handling of characters, sentiments and the total pattern of the work. The greatest master of this art was Premanand of Barods. He rendered the Book of War (Yuddha Kāṇḍa) into a poetic narrative, *Rāma-Yajña* in 1685, in 26 Kaḍavas (short cantos). Before him, Vajiyo (early 17th century), the author of *Sītāvel* and *Sītāsandeś* had tried his hand at the war-account in *Raṇa-jang,* a poem of seventeen Kaḍavas. His title is 'Raṇa-jang'—The War—and not *'Raṇa-jag'*, i.e., Raṇa-Yajña as is clear from

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'Raṇa-jang' rhyming with 'anabhang' at the end of the first and the seventh Kaḍava.

The allegory of 'Yajña'—sacrifice has been alluded to in the Sabhāparva of the *Mahābhārata* ('raṇa-yajñeṣu dīkṣitāḥ') and is spelled out in detail in the *Veṇīsamhāra nāṭaka*, as pointed by Dr. Manjulal R. Majumdar in the preface of his excellent edition of 'Raṇa-Yajña', to which more than to any other single source, the present paper owes for most of the information about names and dates of the works. 'The War-Sacrifice' is alluded to in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself in 'iṣṭvā Sangrāma'—Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa (23-27).

Even though *Raṇa-Yajña* is not one of the best five works of Premanand, it does have an imprint of his great gifts of humour, understanding of human nature and the ability to get at the right objective correlatives. Kumbhakarṇa, on being awakened, asks Rāvaṇa after knowing all about the bone of contention : 'If you have just lodged Jānakī in the garden, what for have you brought her here?' Rāvaṇa answers : 'Whenever I look at the chaste Jānakī, I feel as if she were our mother'. This reminds one of the confession by Lady Macbeth, "Had he not resembled My father as he slept, I had done't." When Sītā is shown from the aerial Puṣpaka—Rāma fallen on the battle-field, the poet utilizing the fact of Rāma being an avatāra says, 'In order to remove Sītā's anguish, Rāma allowed a smile to play on his face.'

Premanand's vivid description of Rāma's arrows chasing Rāvaṇa has a touch of the sublime about it and reminds one of Francis Thompson's 'The Hound of Heaven'.

Rāma in wrath held the bow in his fist.
The lord of Laṅkā fled.
The arrows chased him.
The Ten-faced one could not turn back to face them.
Would Rāma's arrows ever cease to pursue him?
As Death's messengers bound the sinful one,
So did the arrows run after the King of Laṅkā,
He fled to the assembly hall, to the royal garden,
To the cave, into the cellar, on to the upper storeys.
He climbed, came running down and ran for life,

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Breathing heavily, panting, sighing :
'Who—Oh, who will protect me from the arrows of Rāma?'
Lovely daughters-in-law, daughters, maidservants, all
Banged the doors in his face and fled away.
His own sons, nephews, ministers, friends,
On seeing him, turned their face away.
He sought refuge in the seven nether worlds and all islands,
Wherever he went he felt the arrows close to hand.
The King was frightened out of his wits, passing through the three worlds.
The arrows, resounding, rushed behind him.
Crestfallen he went where his wife was,
'Protect me, O Mandodarī,'—the proud one cried.

* * * * * * * * *

The arrows awed by her, stopped at her door.
The queen then mildly rebukes him :
'Do you realize now the prowess of Sītā's husband?'

Premanand's Rāvaṇa had once owned before his wife that the Godhead 'has appeared in a human form to me... I have voluntarily opted for my death.' Now he prepares for the final battle. The poet describes it in an apt metaphor :

As the life-spirit departs from the goodly body,
So did King Rāvaṇa go leaving Laṅkā behind.

Shamal in the 18th century wrote two very popular poems, *Aṅgad vishti* and *Rāvaṇa Mandadorī Samvād*. Dayaram (1777-1852) wrote *Hanumān Garuḍ-Samvād*.

Some women-poets have particularly sung about the marriage of Rāma and Sītā. *Sītāmaṅgal* by Puribai is sung by women at marriage ceremonies. *Sītāvivāh* by Kṛṣṇabai is not yet traced, but her poem on Sītā taking a fancy for the golden deer is extremely popular. Divalibai has a few hundred songs on Rāma's birth, childhood and youth.

Girdhar's *Rāmacaritra* appear in 1837 just before the dawn of the modern period.

Narmad, the pioneer of modern Gujarati literature gave 'Rāmāyaṇa-no-sār' in 1970. He also wrote a play *Rāma Jānakī Darśan*. His elder contemporary, Dalpatram, wrote *Śrāvaṇa-*

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Pitṛbhakti-Nāṭak. Dolatram Pandya's *Indrajit-vadh-Kāvya* (1887), an epic in cantos on the Sanskrit model, has not much to commend itself, except for some patches like the lament of Sulocanā. 'Rāma-ni Kathā' (1926) by Ranjitlal Pandya, 'Kashmalan', given the Rāma-story. Plays on Rāma story are : *Sītā-vanvās* (1902) by Lalit, *Rāma-Viyog* (1906) by Lallubhai N. Desai, 'Yogeshwar', 'Sītāharaṇ (1931) by Manilal C. Bhatta and *Sītā* more recently by Shri C.C. Mehta. *Sītāharaṇ* by Chandrashankar Shukla and 'Dharti-ni Putri', by Shri Kishansinh Chanda have been cherished for their prose. 'Rāmāyaṇa-nan Pātro', a series of booklets on the main characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* by Nanabhai Bhatt have contributed much to an intimate understanding of the epic, especially among the younger generation. *Śrī-Rāma-Kathā* by Shri Valyibhai G. Desai is a brief summary of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in prose, faithfully presenting not only all the relevant episodes but also important poetic descriptions and utterances in Vālmīki's work. Other such attempts are Ratipatiram M. Tripathi's *Samkshipt Rāmāyaṇa* (1928) and Sri Rāmanbhai P. Som's *Rāmāyaṇa Kathāmaṅgal* (1946).

'Daśarath—no Antkāl' (The last hour of Daśaratha), a short poem by Shri Ganapat Bhavsar deserves a special mention. The narrative tissues reflect the ebb of Daśaratha's life while in the last few moments he dwells on the Śrāvaṇ-episode in a mood of confession before Kausalyā. The pauses, even jerks, in the rhythm, the silences punctuating it and the broken spoken words point inevitably to the re-enacting of the tragedy in his own life, on his own failing nerves. Every utterance—word, sound, silence—throbs with immediacy, till at last Daśaratha, after describing how his arrow escaped, has no energy left to finish the sentence and just cries in alarm 'Hay re Hay re Rāma!' indicating that what should not have happened had happened; it had hit the son of the old sage-couple, but also suggesting at the same time by using the words 'O Rāma' in the place of 'O God' that the arrow had hit his own son Rāma, uttering whose name he gasps his last breath and takes upon himself the evil that would befall Rāma, thereby expiating his own sin. Indeed, Shri Ganpat Bhavran, a poet who has ceased writing, and none of whose few poems has survived the past four decades, will be known in Gujarati literature as a one-poem poet.

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The present writer, as part of his experiments in writing verse-plays, has written two pieces 'Mantharā' and 'Bharat'.

There is a verse translation of abridged Vālmīki by Smt. Hansa Mehta, published by the M.S. University of Baroda. Recently Smt. Sushila Jhaveri has rendered the whole of Vālmīki. The present writer serialized a verse rendering of abridged Vālmīki in 'Sanskriti' but the attempt was not continued beyond the middle of the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa.

Shivlal Dhaneshvar's rendering in verse of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulasīdāsa in 1875 earned him laurels. Another verse rendering was published more recently by Santram Mandir, Nadiad.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all attempts at dealing with the Rāma-story in Gujarati but it would give an idea of the impact of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* on Gujarati literature.

I would like to make one final point.

The peaks of the Rāma-story are (1) the bending and breaking of Śiva's bow by Rāma followed by marriage with Sītā, (2) going to the forest for fourteen years, (3) hunting of the golden deer and Sītā's abduction by Rāvaṇa, (4) Sītā's fire-ordeal, (5) Sītā's banishment and (6) Sītā being received by Mother Earth. In the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* human interest stands out as uppermost. It is not so especially in the renderings of the medieval Bhakti period. Rāma and Sītā came to be treated as Deities with the result that the less human they appeared, the less Deities they were. The influence is seen in the Gujarati *Rāmacaritra* of Girdhar, who to take but one exapmple, shows that the gods secretly entreated Sītā not to go out of the hut with alms, in her original celestial form but in a shadow-form (chhāyā-rūpa) in order not to burn Rāvaṇa when he lifted her and to enable him to carry her away to Laṅkā so that Rāma would be compelled to go there and kill him. This approach saps the human interest of the crisis at the end of the war, *viz.*, the fire-ordeal as also that of Sītā's banishment. Vālmīki's Rāma and Sītā are human. As a matter of fact, when the golden deer approaches their Ashrama both of them appear all too human. Sītā evinces a woman's natural inclination to possess a decorative article. Rāma re-acts and behaves as any husband. The behaviour of the couple has an element of 'the tragic flaw'

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in it and has not a little to contribute to their sufferings. The whole poem hinges in it. There would be no *Rāmāyaṇa* in the absence of this human frailty. To try to present Sītā and Rāma as Deities at that juncture is to indulge in a peculiarly medieval make believe which turns the story into a mechanical affair, cutting at the very root of its poetic interest. Because Vālmīki sometimes dares present Rāma and Sītā as humanly human, he succeeds also in presenting them as divinely human or shall I say humanly divine.

Vālmīki means, literally, one covered under an ant-hill. It indicates his great capacity to concentrate, remaining unmindful of being covered up. We too in our day, whether or not capable of concentration, do appear to be Vālmīkis, being covered up by letters, pamphlets, handbills, magazines, periodicals, booklets, monograms and what not, showered upon us by a number of agencies.

Vālmīki lived on the river Tamasā (the Dark one). Possibly he cherished remaining in the dark. He had no taste for hitting the headlines, as they say to-day.

The human family is in an unprecedented turmoil at the present moment. It is hoped that covered under the heap of ever-pouring papers, there must be some Vālmīki in some language concentrating in the dark on the lineaments of relationships that must emerge if the human family is to survive.

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ŚRĪ RĀMĀYAṆA IN TAMILNADU IN ART, THOUGHT and LITERATURE

By R. NAGASWAMY

The paper presents in a brief perspective the Rāmāyaṇa as portrayed in art, thought and literature in Tamilnadu through the centuries. A chronological perspective is attempted which shows a gradual growth, undergoing changes due to incoming new traditions. A few illustrations are also included. At the end a list of places where *Rāmāyaṇa* paintings and sculptures could be seen are added.

In Classical Works

The story of Rāma, is mentioned in the earliest body of Tamil Literature known as the Sangam Classics assigned to the first two centuries of the Christian era.[1] One of the verses in the *Puranānūru*[2] collection, refers to the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, Sītā dropping her ornaments on seeing the monkeys, and the monkeys wearing them on the wrong parts not knowing how to wear them. One of the *Ahanānūru* verses[3] refers to the council held by Rāma on the sea coast before invading Laṅkā. Episodes from *Rāmāyaṇa* are also found mentioned in the *Paripāḍal*[4] collections. One of the celebrated poets of the Sangam age bore the name Vānmikī[5] (*Puram*—358). The above references would suffice to show that *Rāmāyaṇa* had wielded considerable influence in Tamilnadu from the beginning of the Christian era.

The post-Sangam classics *Siḷappadhikāram*[6] and *Maṇimekhalai*[7] carry many references to *Rāmāyaṇa*-episodes.

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1 'Rāmāyaṇa and Tamil traditions'—Ārāychi Tohuti—by M. Raghava Iyengar, Madras, 1964.

2 *Puram*—378, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer Edition.

3 *Aham*—70, Murray S. Rajam Edition.

4 *Paripāḍal* 19-50. 2, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer Edition.

5 *Puram*—358.

6 *Śilappadhikāram*, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer Edition—332, 371, 444, 543. Madras, 1960.

7 *Maṇimekhalai*—17, lines 9-12.

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A complete Tamil Rāmāyaṇa seems to have been written before the 8th century A.D. Perundevanār, a famous poet of the 9th century A.D. who sang the *Mahābhārata* in Tamil refers to "*Śrī Rāmakathā.*"[8] Another Tamil work, *Yāpparunkalavṛtti* assignable to 9th century A.D. refers to "Rāmāyaṇa and Purāṇasāgara" written in Tamil Veṇbā metre.

The most outstanding Tamil work is undoubtedly the *Rāmāvatāra* by Kamban who is assigned to the end of 9th century A.D. by some and to 12th century by others. Though it is difficult to be definite on this subject, a tradition giving the śaka era, when this great work was composed, seems to suggest the late 9th century A.D. as a more probable date for this poet. Kamban himself explicitly states that he was following Vānmīki in his work and names his kāvya *Rāmāvatāra Mahākathā*. With subtle changes introduced at appropriate points, and reaching the highest pinnacle of poetic genius, Kamban has ecclipsed all other great poets of the Tamil horizon. There were many other works composed during the centuries, but Kamban continues to remain the brightest star.

Jain version[9] of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were also composed in Tamil in the early mediaeval period, from which verses have survived.

In Bhakti hymns

The popularity of the Rāma-story in the south, also owes its inspiration to the Bhakti cult, spearheaded by Vaiṣṇavite Aḷvārs and the Śaivite Nāyanmārs of the 7th and 8th century A.D.

Particular mention must be made of the Vaiṣṇavite Ālvārs who were great innovators in poetic diction and appealed to the elite and the common people, the women and children alike. The themes and the presentation they chose are so novel, that they would never fail to fascinate even the layman. Periyāḷvār chose the episode of Hanumān meeting Sītā[10], presenting the ring and recounting one evidence after the other to infuse confidence in her that he was an envoy of Rāma.

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8 'Rāmāyaṇa and Tamil Traditions' *Ibid.*, p. 17.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

10 *Periyālvār Thirumoli—Nālāyira Divyaprabandham*—Mylai Madavadasan edition, Madras, 1962, p. 75.

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Kulaśekharāḷvār describes the pitiable condition of Daśaratha and his laments over Rāma's departure to the forest.[11]

Kulaśekhara also narrates the complete story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in ten verses which include Rāma listening to the story of Rāvaṇa from Agastya and his own story from Lava and Kuśa. So the Uttarakāṇḍa of *Rāmāyaṇa* was quite popular in Tamilnadu by 8th century A.D.

But somewhat more imaginative is the approach of thirumaṅgai Ālvār[12], who narrates the pathetic plight of the Rākṣasas of Laṅkā after Rāvaṇa was killed. They appeal to Sugrīva, Hanumān, Aṅgada, Nala and other monkeys to spare their life. They weep, roll and say,

> "Ye monkeys—We shiver at your sight—we now sing the glories of Rāma—we bow down, before you, pray kill us not."

This approach of Thirumaṅgai is not only original but also dramatic.

The Śaivite Nāyanmārs also give us some glimpses of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Being Śaivite, the Nāyanmārs repeatedly refer to Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa, receiving the name Rāvaṇa and pleasing Śiva with his Sāmavedic chants. It is while speaking of the city of Laṅkā, a detailed description of its location, fortification, the strength of Rāvaṇa's army, etc., are referred to. Sītā's abduction[13], and Rāma killing Rāvaṇa are also mentioned in the Devāram hymns. Besides, Rāma installing Śivaliṅga and worshipping it to expiate the sin of killing Rāvaṇa, are prominently referred to. Jaṭāyu and Sampāti, the two eagles, worshipped Śiva at Pullirukkuvelūr. There is also the shrine Tiruppuṭkuzhi where Rāma cremated Jaṭāyu.

In Āgamas

Besides the classical Tamil works and the Bhakti hymns another group of literature, which has an important bearing on

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 174-179.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 413-417.

[13] தேவியை வவ்விய தென்னிலங்கை தசமாமுகன் பூவியலும் முடிபொன்று
வித்த பழிபோயற ஏவியலும் சிலை அண்ணல் செய்த ராமேச்சரம்
Jñānasambandar—Rāmeśvara hymns.

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the cult of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the Tamil country, is the Āgamic literature, particularly of the Vaiṣṇavite faith. Though it is difficult to assign a definite date to any of them, some like the *Marīci Saṁhitā* of the Vaikhānasa School, seem to be earlier than the 8th century A.D. They prescribe the installation of Rāma-images in specific places of the temple.

According to the *Bhṛgu Saṁhitā*[14] one desirous of attaining Vijaya, Prajā or Mokṣa may worship Rāma.

विजयार्थी प्रजार्थी वा मोक्षार्थी वा रामम् अर्चयेत्। 96.80

An apsidal or rectangular Vimāna seems to be suited for a Rāma temple.[15]

विमानं हस्तिपृष्टं वा स्यात् प्रशस्तं गोपुराकृतिः। p. 282.

According to the *Marīci Saṁhitā*, the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are to be installed either in the first *āvaṛṇa* or the second *āvaṛṇa* and worshipped. Rāma is to be installed in Niṛṛti (S.W.) direction.[16] He should face either east or north. To his right should be placed Sītā and to his left, Lakṣmaṇa. Bharata and Śatrughna are to be shown to the right and left of Rāma respectively. Hanumān is to stand in front to the right.

Purāṇas

Besides Vālmīki's epic, the Purāṇas have also preserved the story of Rāma in abridged forms. Paurāṇic versions, particularly of the Vaiṣṇavite branch, seem to have greatly influenced the temple movement. The temples portray various forms and incarnations of Viṣṇu as depicted in Purāṇas, and it is from this group that the Rāma-story is also derived.

In Art

It is well-known that the surviving temples in Tamilnadu could be traced back only to the Pallava period, 7th-8th century A.D. A continuous history of art could be gleaned from 7th century A.D. from the time of the Pallava ruler Mahendra

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14 *Bhṛgu Saṁhitā*, Tirupati Edition, 1961, p. 281.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 282.
16 *Marīci Saṁhitā*, Tirupati Ed.—1926, p. 143.

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Varman-I. In the early periods, temples dedicated to Viṣṇu in his Yoga, Bhoga, Vīra, Ābhicārika forms were most popular. Among the avatāras, the Narasimha, Trivikrama and Varāha aspects have been the most favourites. No temple dedicated to Rāma as chief deity seems to have been erected or excavated in the 7th century, either in the Pallava or Pāṇḍya territory. No sculpture of Rāma or other heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story has survived.

8th century A.D.—Kāñcī

In the 8th century the picture becomes more clear. In the Kailāsanātha temple of Kāñcī, erected by Rājasimha, in the beginning of 8th century A.D., there is a representation of Vāli worshipping Liṅga[17] and Rāvaṇa trying to disturb him. In the Ōlakkaṇṇeśvara temple on the top of the hill Māmallapuram the northern niche of the *garbhagṛha* carries the sculpture of Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti. An inscription at Māmallapuram also of the same period, refers to Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa.[18]

यस्यङ्गुष्टभराक्रान्तः कैलासः सदशाननः ।
पातालमगमद् मूर्ध्ना श्रीनिधिस्तं बिभर्त्यजम् ॥

Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa is repeated in a number of Pallava temples at Kāñci assignable to 8th century A.D.

In the Ādivarāha cave at Māmallapuram there is an inscription in Pallava grantha characters of 8th century A.D. It is generally held to be contemporary with the cave. It gives the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.[19]

मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहश्च नारसिंहश्च वामनः ।
रामो रामश्च रामश्च बुद्धः कल्की दश स्मृताः ॥

The Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl temple at Kāñcī, called Parameśvara Viṇṇagaram in inscriptions and literature, is assigned to Nandivarman Pallavamalla. It is three storeyed temple with a *garbhagṛha* in each storey. It has preserved the earliest Viṣṇu

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[17] Nolamba sculpture in the Madras Museum, C. Śivaramamurthi, Madras 1964, p. XLIV.

[18] *SII*, Vol. I, No. 18, Verse 3.

[19] *SII*, Vol. XII, No. 116

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forms in various aspects. Though it is difficult to identify some of the representations a general distribution of the sculptures could easily be discerned. In the northern wall of the ground floor, the avatāra aspects of Viṣṇu are portrayed in an order. We can easily see Varāha, Narasimha and Vāmana aspects appearing in succession. There are three more sculptures without any distinguishing emblems, which probably represent the three Rāmas—Paraśurāma, Kodaṇḍarāma and Balarāma. This would perhaps be the earliest representation of Rāma to be met with in Tamilnadu.

Uttaramerur

The Sundaravarada temple at Uttaramērūr[20], was also a foundation of the same ruler, Nandivarman Pallavamalla. Like the Vaikuṇṭha perumal temple, this has three storeys with a *garbhagṛha* in each storey. This however does not portray sculptures as at Kāñcī. But from inscriptions we learn that there was an image of Rāma in this temple. According to the inscription the image was called Rāghavadeva. Another inscription refers to it as Ayodhi-perumān. The village Uttaramērūr was a Vaiṣṇava settlement of the Vaikhānasa sect, established in 8th century A.D.

The inscriptions of this village refer to a number of deities, the names of some, namely, Govardhanattupperumāl[21], Āyapādi perumāl[22], Duvaraipperumāl[23] (Dvārakā) and Ayoddhipperumāl[24] being interesting. The deities being named after their place is a noteworthy feature. Rāma called after Ayodhyā as Ayoddhipperumāl is the point of interest.

The presence of Rāma in both the Pallava temples, one at Kāñcī and the other at Uttaramērūr, conform to the Vaikhānasa Āgamic code wherein Rāma should find a place in the three storeyed structure.

Citrakūṭa at Chidambaram

We have mentioned earlier that in the 8th century, the Vaiṣṇavite Āḷvārs propagated the Bhakti faith vigorously. The

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20 Uttaramērūr, Francoise Gros and R. Nagaswamy, Pondicherry 1970.
21 *SII*—III, 297.
22 *SII*—III, 158.
23 *ARE* 183/1923.
24 *SII*—VI, 297.

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famous Naṭarāja temple at Chidambaram is also known for its Viṣṇu shrine now called Govindarāja. But it seems to have been originally visualised as one dedicated to Rāma. The name of the temple according to the Āḷvārs was Citrakūṭa of *Rāmāyaṇa*-fame. Kulaśekhara sings the Lord of this shrine as Śrī Rāma. It is here that he recounts the whole of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Kulaśekhara mentions that Rāma was seated with Māruti in Citrakūṭa at Chidambaram (Tillai).

He also states that Rāma was seated on *maṇi-āsana* at Citrakūṭa—Kulaśekhara's verses specifically state that Rāma was in seated posture in the temple.

Thirumaṅgaimannan who came 30 or 40 years later is not specific about the nature of the deity though he also calls the temple Citrakūṭa. He speaks of the deity in general terms, particularly in the Kṛṣṇa aspect. He also mentions that the deity was seated.

However, the literature of the Chola period of the 12th century seems to suggest that the deity was the reclining form of Viṣṇu.

Kulottuṅga II, in order to expand the shrine of Naṭarāja, removed the Viṣṇu shrine which was reconsecrated in the reign of Achyutarāya of the Vijayanagar dynasty in 16th century, when the present reclining image was installed. The point worthy of note is that in the 8th century Kulaśekhara conceives of the main deity of Citrakūṭa as Śrī Rāma.

The presiding deity of another temple namely Kaṇṇapuram, is also called Śrī Rāma by Kulaśekhara. Rāma is conceived as a child and the hymns are in the form of lullaby.

But it is not clear whether the original image was Rāma. Suffice it to say that in the 8th century A.D., the concept of Rāma as the chief deity of the temple had come into vogue.

Nandī as Hanumān

An excavated cave at Koṭṭārakara taluk, Quilon District, Kerala assignable to 8th century A.D. is of interest. It is a cave dedicated to Śiva but in the place of Dvārapāla, the figure of a

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monkey appears.[25] According to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Hanumān was an incarnation of Nandī. The monkey standing in the place of Dvārapāla is obviously Nandī-Hanumān. There is a tradition that Nandī had a monkey-face or face like that of a monkey and Rāvaṇa ridiculed him for this and Nandī cursed that he would be born as a monkey (Hanumān) and bring about Rāvaṇa's end.

Rāmāyaṇa Miniature Panels (9th century)

With the advent of the 9th century we enter into an important period in the artistic representation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is seen more in Śaivite temples of the period than that of the Vaiṣṇavite school. The complete story of *Rāmāyaṇa* came to be portrayed in miniature panels in the adhishṭhānavargas of the Śaivite temples. This important trend is noticed, mostly in temples assigned to Āditya Chola in late 9th century A.D. He erected several stone temples to Śiva on the banks of the river Kāverī.

Representations of *Rāmāyaṇa*-episodes in miniature panels on the adhishṭhāna of the Śiva temples began even earlier, in the later Pallava periods. The Kaḍimuḍi Mahādeva temple at Thiruchinnampooṇḍi, bearing as inscription of Tellarerinda Naṇdi, shows some panels. So does the Tavatturai Mahādeva temple at Lālgudi.

But the continuous narration of the whole story is found in the temples of Āditya Chola I. Besides the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes, manifestations of other Gods like Śiva, Devī and others also occur. The Nāgeśvara temple at Kumbakonam[26], and the Śiva temple at Pullamaṅgai, are the best examples of this.

Why the entire story of Rāma found favour in Śiva temples is a question yet eluding satisfactory answer. But it is interesting to mention that the Chola ruler Āditya who ushered in this narration of the Epic in stone had a significant title Kodaṇḍarāma.

The portrayal seems to follow the narration of Vālmīki, for example when Hanumān met Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa for the first

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[25] *Sancturies Rupesties De Inde De Sud*, P. P. Z. Pattabhiramin, Pondicherry, 1971.

[26] The Rāmāyaṇa panels in the Nāgeśvara temple, Kumbakonam, has been dealt with in detail by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam, in the *Journal of Indian History*, 1967.

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time, he carried them on his shoulders to meet Sugrīva. In Kamban a different version is recounted. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa do not go to meet Sugrīva but Sugrīva himself comes to meet them.

We have mentioned earlier that it was during this century Kamban wrote his Tamil *Rāmāvatārakathā*. The representation of *Rāmāyaṇa* miniature sculptures was continued in the reign of Āditya's son Parāntaka and his successors, till the end of 10th century A.D. The episodes of Vāli worshipping Liṅga and the Vāli-Sugrīva fight are found to be favourite themes in many temples.

Thirumangalam in Tiruchi District is another place where the entire scenes from *Rāmāyaṇa* are sculpted on the base of the temple. The temple itself was built in the late 10th century.

Bronzes

The 10th century A.D. is significant from another angle. That Rāma-worship had assumed remarkable proportions is seen from excellent portrayal of Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān in Bronze. The finest representations of Rāma-group in bronze, were made during this century.

The Rāma-group fromVaḍakkuppanayūr[27], now in the Madras Museum, Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa from Paruthiyūr[28] near Kumbakonam and the Thirucherai group[29] are well-known examples. Śrī S.R. Balasubramaniam has published an excellent group from Kappalūr.[30]

There is an outstanding group of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā in Thiruppattūr, Ramnad district. The workmanship is not only of superlative degree, but also representative of a regional style probably influenced by the Pāṇḍya school of 9th century A.D.

In the 11th and 12th century A.D. the bronze images continue to occur conforming to the sculptural forms of the period. In stone they occur rarely while no painting of this period has survived.

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27 *Bronzes of South India,* P.R. Srinivasan (Vaḍaūkkupanaiyūr, Fig. 96).
28 *Bronzes of South India,* P.R. Srinivasan (Paruthiyur, Fig. 90).
29 *Early Chola Bronzes*, Douglas Barrett, F. 43-47.
30 *Early Chola Bronzes,* S.R. Balasubramaniam, New Delhi, 1971, p. 144.

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An inscription of 11th century from Anbil, Tiruchi district, records the setting up of bronze images of Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān.[31]

In all these bronze images Rāma is shown with only two arms holding a bow in the left arm and arrow in the right. He is shown as a beautiful young king, wearing crown and other ornaments. His lower garment is shown only up to the middle of the thigh. Sītā is shown as a lovely young maiden wearing her hair in the Dhammilla fashion. Lakṣmaṇa is also shown with two arms, wearing a crown. The portrayal of Hanumān is expressive of serenity and submission. With the right arm, the monkey king is shown covering his mouth and with the left holding his dress. In some cases he is shown bare-headed while in others he is shown wearing a crown.

Hanumān, the scholar devotee

The portrayal of Hanumān in this posture is of interest. During his coronation, Rāma made many presents to all those who helped him in his war against Rāvaṇa. When the turn of Hanumān came, Rāma could not adequately express his gratitude to the great hero. Narrating Māruti's great valour and help, Rāma said, "I can only offer myself as a present for your sincere devotion and service." So saying he asked Hanumān to embrace him. Hanumān, the embodiment of wisdom, valour and heroism, stood modestly by the side of his master, with his head slightly bent and covering his mouth with his palm. This picturisation of Hanumān as the very incarnation of *Vinaya*, is a noteworthy feature of Kamban in his Tamil *Rāmāyaṇa*. That this picturisation of Hanumān is found in all bronzes of 10th and 11th century A.D. shows the impact of Kamban's concept of Hanumān on contemporary art and religious motifs. This also indicates that Kamban should have lived in 9th century A.D.

The representation of Rāmāyaṇa panels in stone receives a special impetus in the 13th century. The Kampahareśvara temple at Tribhuvanam was built by Kulottuṅga III. The story of Rāma

[31] *SII.* Vol. VIII, No. 187.

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is portrayed on the base of the maṇḍapa which seems to have undergone rebuilding in later period. Śrī H. Sarkar[32] has discussed these panels at length in his work on Tribhunanam. He has pointed out that the version followed in these panels seems to be close to Vālmīki than Kamban, with certain local adaptation.

The point of interest in these panels is Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa being shown worshipping Śiva probably at Rāmeśvara.

The Śiva temple at Dharmapurī, built in 8th century and enlarged in 13th century, carries the *Rāmāyaṇa* story portrayed on the base of the garbhagṛha.

In the Flag

Hanumān figures on the flag of the Kāḍavarāya family. Āḷappirantān Vīraśekaran alias Kāḍavarāya in 12th century had Hanumān as his *lānchana* in his flag.[33]

This is inspired by the tradition that Hanumān was on the flag of Arjuna (Kapi-dhvaja) in the *Mahābhārata* battle.

Kannada tradition

The close of 13th century may be considered as the beginning of Kannada-Telugu tradition in Tamil country. The Hoysalas of Dorasamudra established a secondary Capital at Kannanūr near Trichy. Narasimha, Someśvara and Vīrarāmanātha are three important rulers who had considerable sway in Tamil region and they adopted quickly Tamil as the court language, with the result that a happy blend of Kannada tradition began to occur. In Śrīrangam, a temple dedicated to Veṇugopāla was erected in the Hoysala style in the reign of Vīrarāmanātha.

This shrine is a fine jewel in the Śrīrangam temple. On its walls are shown figures of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā in the late Hoysala style. A maṇḍapa in front of the Tāyār (Devi) shrine is now called the maṇḍapa where Kamban is said to have expounded his *Rāmāyaṇa*. The maṇḍapa itself is a late 13th

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32 *Kampahareśvara temple* H. Sarkar, Madras 1974, pp. 36-39.

33 *SII.* Vol. XIII, 263, 264, 265.

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century structure. Even if Kamban's date as 12th century is accepted, the structure cannot be considered to be contemporary with Kamban. The maṇḍapa is a Hyosala structure. But it is of interest to mention that Rāma sculpture is found on one of the pillars here.

Vijayanagar—Nāyaka—Telugu tradition

The Vijayanagar rule was established firmly in 14th century and till the beginning of the 18th century, continued to hold sway. Though the Vijayanagar emperors held control over the Tamil country they were principally represented by three Nāyak governors who had their seats of power at Gingee, Tanjore and Madurai. The Nāyaks were related by family and marriage to the Vijayanagar emperors. Besides encouraging Tamil and Sanskrit they brought Telugu traditions with them. Soon sculptures and paintings in Tamilnadu assumed the Vijayanagar-Nāyak garb.

So far as *Rāmāyaṇa* was concerned this was the period when separate temples came to be built for Rāma as the main deity. In many of the Vaiṣṇavite temples the entire story of Rāma came to be painted on the ceilings with lebels below each.

Independent shrines came to be built for Hanumān on a large scale. In some instances as at Nāmakkal, the stone sculptures of Hanumān were more than 16 feet in height. There is a huge Hanumān in Sucīndram temple. Each Nāyak contributed to the development of art and literature in his own region.

We will see a few outstanding contributions of the Vijayanagar-Nāyak dynasty. In the Varadarāja temple of Kāñcī, the celebrated 100 pillared hall[34], was built in the Vijayanagar reign in 16th century A.D. Besides the various *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes depicted on pillars and the base of this ornate maṇḍapa, the central pillars in the raised platform carry the image of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa; the other pillars are empty but that originally they carried the sculptures is evident. Now this maṇḍapa is considered a *Kalyāna-maṇḍapa.*

In the Sundaravarada temple at Uttaramērūr in the upper storey, the *antarāla* has a beautiful painting of Śrī Rāma with

[34] *Sri Varadarājaswami temple,* Kāñcī, K.V. Rāman, New Delhi, 1975, p. 53.

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Sītā. On the opposite wall is Kṛṣṇa. The temple underwent renovation in 16th century A.D and these paintings belong to that period.

Chengam paintings

In the Arjunasārathi temple in Chengam, the Tamilnadu Department of Archaeology brought to light recently *Rāmāyaṇa* paintings. The temple itself was buld in the reign of Gingee Nāyak, towards the end of 16th century A.D.

The central deity of the temple is Kṛṣṇa but in the front mandapa where the portrait of the builder is seen, the ceiling was painted with the entire story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. The paintings in the central square alone have survived, the others have disappeared, but bear traces of panels. Telugu labels are seen on some of them, while in the inner court all the paintings bear labels in Tamil.

The scenes in the inner court, which have survived to this day begin with the Yuddhakāṇḍa, with Indrajit's fights with Lakṣmaṇa; Lakṣmaṇa swoons; Hanumān is sent for bringing Sañjīvanī hill; Indrajit performs *Nikumbhila Yāga* and the death of Indrajit at the hands of Lakṣmaṇa are found on one side. The fight between Rāvaṇa and Rāma forms the theme on the other side. It is here that we find some interesting deviations from the well-known Vālmīki story. Rāvaṇa was not able to fight with Rāma. He performs *pātāla-homa*. Hanumān, Aṅgada and other monkeys disturb Rāvaṇa but Rāvaṇa was steadfast and could not be moved. Aṅgada struck a new course. He went and dragged Mandadorī and started beating her. Even Hanumān beat Mandodarī. The labels in Tamil read 'Rāvaṇa performs *pātāla-homa*', 'Aṅgada disturbing the *Homa*', 'Hanumān beating Mandodarī', 'Aṅgada dragging Mandodarī by hair', 'Rāvaṇa being disturbed by the cries of his queen', 'fight with Aṅgada' and 'Hanumān rescues her.' This episode eventually unsettles Rāvaṇa's *homa*.

The episode of Rāvaṇa performing *Pātāla-homa* is not found in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Nor does it occur in Kamban's work but is found in the Telugu Raṅganātha *Rāmāyaṇa* ascribed to 14th century A.D.

We have mentioned that the Nāyakas were of Telugu origin, and that some of the scenes here bear Telugu labels. So I am inclined to believe that the *Rāmāyaṇa* followed in this mural is

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a Telugu version. The scenes are said to occur also in *Adhyātma* and *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇas*. But in all these versions only Aṅgada is said to drag Mandodarī and beat her. Hanumān is not a participant. Hanumān as known to the Tamils as such a noble and divine character that it would appear rather strange to portray him dragging another man's wife. It would be interesting to see whether Hanumān dragging Mandodarī is actually found in any literature or is a folk tradition. Dr. Raghavan has in his book 'Some Old Lost Rāma Plays'[35] mentioned that Rāvaṇa performing a sacrifice, the same being disturbed by Aṅgada dragging Mandodarī by hair and thereby creating a commotion is found in an early Sanskrit Rāma play called *Kṛtvārāvaṇa*.

Rāma's return to Ayodhyā with Sītā and the monkeys in the Puṣpaka Vimāna, which appears as the third part in the temple has also some noteworthy deviations. The scenes depicted are Sītā taking bath, wearing new clothes, being carried in a palanquin led by a band of musicians, the fire ordeal and Agni returning Sītā. Rāma is then shown worshipping nine little shrines. This scene is not found in Vālmīki's version. But there is a tradition that Rāma worshipped the *Navagrahas* (at the sacred place called the Navapāṣāṇa near Rāmanāthapuram). This scene might probably represent that tradition.

The last scene depicted is *Rāmapaṭṭābhiṣeka* witnessed by the celestials, monkeys and mortals. Among those witnessing the coronation is the Nāyak ruler, the author of the temple and the painting. The portrayal of the patron in the celestial coronation seems to be an age-old tradition. The Rāmapaṭṭābhiṣeka scence is an excellent depiction here. *Rāmāyaṇa* panels are also found in Gingee temple belonging to the Nāyak period.

Kumbhakonam—Rāmaswāmi temple

In the Tanjore region, Raghunātha Nāyak was responsible for a great revival of Rāma cult. The Rāmaswāmi temple at Kumbakonam built by him is perhaps the best temple dedicated to Rāma on a grand scale. The *garbhagṛha* and the front *mandapa* are unique in many respects.

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[35] *Some Old Lost Rāma Plays*, Dr. V. Raghavan, Annamalai University, 1961, pp. 42-44.

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In the front *mandapa* almost every pillar is carved with excellent sculptures, some of them being in life-size. The portraits of Raghunātha Nāyak and his queens are portrayed in one of the pillars. Almost all the pillars carry sculptures connected with the *Rāmāyaṇa. Sugrīva-paṭṭābhiṣeka, Vibhīṣaṇa-paṭṭābhiṣeka, Ahalyā-śāpavimocana* are such scenes depicted prominently.

The sculptures seem to indicate that a special version of the Epic seems to have been adopted here. For example, emphasis is laid on Hanumān who is repeatedly portrayed as a musician, playing Vīṇā. There is a life-size figure of Hanumān carrying a Vīṇā. Nārada and some sages are also portrayed carrying Vīṇā. In music literature and tradition Hanumān (Āñjaneya) is mentioned as a music authority and his views are referred to as *Hanumān-mata*. The *Sangītasudhā* written by Govinda Dīkṣita for this same Raghunātha Nāyak describes Hanumān learning music with sage Yāṣṭika in a plantain-grove.[36]

There is an important sculpture on one of the pillars in the central part of the *mandapa*. In it are shown Rāma seated with Sītā. Rāma is holding his hand in *Vyākhyāna-mudrā*. Seated at his feet, is Hanumān listening eagerly to Rāma with a palm-leaf manuscript in his hand. On the side face of the pillar are shown sages. The whole scene is reminiscent of one of the famous invocatory verses recited before taking up the reading or exposition of the Epic.

वैदेहीसहितं सुरद्रुमतले हैमे महामण्डपे
मध्ये पुष्पकमासने मणिमये वीरासने सुस्थितम् ।
अग्रे वाचयति प्रभञ्जनसुते तत्त्वं मुनिभ्यः परं
व्याख्यान्तं भरतादिभिः परिवृतं रामं भजे श्यामलम् ॥

The main point of interest is that Rāma is shown as a teacher of supreme knowledge and Hanumān appears as the disciple.

Inside the sanctum, Rāma and Sītā are shown seated. Here again Rāma is shown as a teacher and Hanumān is seated in front holding the palm-leaf manuscript. Behind Rāma are shown his brothers.

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[36] Some Names in Early Sangīta Literature, Dr. V. Raghavan, *Journal of the Music Academy,* Madras, Vol. III, pp. 18, 95.

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In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata,* Hanumān is portrayed as a great devotee singing the praise of Rāma. Nārada also is said to sing the greatness of Rāma; Nārada considers Rāma as the embodiment of Yoga.[37]

किंपुरुषे वर्षे भगवन्तम् आदिपुरुषं लक्ष्मणाग्रजं सीताभिरामं
श्रीरामं तच्चरणसन्निकर्षाभिरतः परमभागवतः हनुमान् सह
किंपुरुषैः अविरतभक्तिः उपास्ते ।
आर्ष्टिषेणेन सह गन्धर्वैः अनुगीयमानां परमकल्याणीं भर्तृ-
भगवत्कथां समुपश्रृणोति स्वयं च इदं गायति ।

In his *Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja,* Dr. Raghavan has dealt with this tradition.[38]

Rāma, the main deity, as installed in this temple is mainly a teacher of *Ātmavidyā*.[39] It is interesting to mention that Tyāgarāja, the saint-composer of Carnatic music, states in one of his compositions that Hanumān recited Purāṇa daily in the presence of Rāma.[40]

In this connection an illustrated *Rāmāyaṇa*-manuscript in Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tanjore, may also be mentioned. There are only three cardboards, preserved with the paintings. In each borad one *Kāṇḍa* is painted. It bears labels in Telugu characters. From a label it is seen that the paintings were done by a certain Veṅkaṭaperumāl Rājuḍu of Narikaṇṭi. The paintings show the use of golden colour which is seen for the first time. The painting is assigned to 17th century.[41]

In Thiruvellarai, near Trichy, some parts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are found painted on the ceilings of the *Maṇḍapa* in the Viṣṇu temple. The paintings are fairly well-preserved, and portray Vāli-Sugrīva fight, Vāli's cremation, Sugrīva-Paṭṭābhiṣeka, etc.

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[37] *Srimad Bhāgavata*, 5.19, 1-2.

[38] *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja,* Dr. V. Raghavan, Madras, p. 143.

[39] *Tattavasangraha Rāmāyaṇa*, Dr. V. Raghavan, *Annals of Oriental Research,* University of Madras, Vol. X. pp. 25, 31 and 51.

[40] *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja,* Dr. V. Raghavan, 2nd edn., R.K. Mission, Madras, p. 143.

[41] *South Indian Painting*, C. Śivaramamurti, Fig. 87.

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The paintings are in late Vijayanagar style and may be assigned to the end of the 11th century or beginning of 17th century.

In the Śrī-Raṅganātha temple of Śrī Raṅgam, murals from the beginning of the *Rāmāyaṇa* to the end of *Sītākalyāṇa* are painted in the ceiling of the *Maṇḍapa* near the *dhvajastambha* in front of the Veṇugopāla shrine. The paintings seems to date from late 17th century A.D.

In the Śrī Raṅgam temple, a few iovry pieces of the period of Thirumalai Nāyak of Madurai (17th century) are preserved. They originally formed part of an iovry *Maṇḍapa* and represent various deities like Viṣṇu, Śiva, etc.

One of the pieces portrays Hanumān by the side of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. It is an excellant piece of art.

A complete series of *Rāmāyaṇa* paintings, probably executed under the inspiration of the Madurai Nāyaks, is found in Śrīvilliputtūr. The paintings are labelled in Tamil. Besides these the Madurai Nāyaks have also carved large-size images of Rāma with other sculptures in temples like Śrīvilliputtūr. In the Thirugokarṇam temple at Pudukkottai, the Toṇḍaimāns have painted the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the ceiling of the front *Maṇḍapa* in 18th century.

A word may be said about the technique of these murals. Except in early phases, the Nāyak paintings are shown as small panels with labels below each, simulating the painted paper manuscripts the impact of which began to be felt during this period.

Vīra Āñjaneya

In considering the Rāma cult in the Vijayanagar Nāyak period, we find two main streams, one adoring Rāma as the supreme deity and the second worshipping Hanumān as an independent deity. We have mentioned the worship of Rāma.

Hanumān was conceived in the Chola period as the greatest scholar, full of *Vinaya* and devotion. He was the personification of an era of great learning and prosperity. The people of the Chola age visualised in him all that was perfect in a heroic, learned and at the same time a full and ideal devotee. Though himself divine, Hanumān was content to remain a servant of his Lord.

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The Vijayanagar days witnessed a different political and social set up. They had to safeguard their religion, kingdom and society from the Muhammadan invasion. They had also to face and overcome bitter internal strife. What they wanted was courage and heroism. Their poems, their folk-songs, etc., were all tuned to this adoration of the heroic cult and so the Hanumān of this period was Vīra Āñjaneya who will bestow strength, energy, courage, conquest, etc. He was portrayed as a warrior, with raised right arm, as if ready to strike. The Vīra Āñjaneya cult is so popular in Tamilnadu that it is not an exaggeration to say that every village in Tamilnadu has a Vīra Āñjaneya shrine or sculpture.

On Coins

The impact of Rāma cult on the currency of the Vijayanagar period is also noticed in the coins issued by them and also the commemorative issues popularly called Rāmaṭaṅkas. One of the coin issued by Veṅkaṭapatirāya bears on its obverse the figure of Hanumān advancing to the right and a Nāgarī legend in the reverse Śrī Veṅkaṭapatirāya.[42] Walter Elliot refers to a gold coin, weighing 58 grains, with the figures of Rāma, Sītā and Hanumān on the obverse and an inscription in old Canarese reading Īśvara on the reverse. (*Coins of Southern India,* Elliot, Fig. 108 and page 99).

The *Rāmaṭaṅkas* were commemorative issues, bearing the *Rāma Paṭṭābhiṣeka* scene in which Hanumān finds a prominent place. These were probably issued by the Vijayanagar rulers for being gifted either during their coronations or during their *Tulābhāra* ceremonies, when large number of such gold issues were gifted as presents. Elliot also mentions a gold coin of smaller size, with Hanumān holding a flower on the obverse and two seated figures in the reverse.[43] The Hanumān of the coin resembles the sculptural representation of the period.

With the advent of the Marattas in Tanjore, *Rāma-Paṭṭābhiṣeka* scene became the most popular, one of the best

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[42] *South Indian Coins,* Sir T. Desikachari, p. 191.

[43] *Ibid.,* pl. IV, p. 185

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being the one at Tanjore Sarasvati Mahal. The *Rāma-Paṭṭābhiṣeka* painting of the Maratta school is of common occurrence.

With the advent of the saint-composer, Tyāgarāja, the Rāma-cult became a part of Tamil life, particularly in the form of *Bhajana* in places popularly called *Bhajan-maṭhas* where the principal deity would be a picture of *Rāma-Paṭṭābhiṣeka*. An exhaustive study of Rāma as portrayed by Tyāgarāja in about 600 songs of his, in the background of the entire Rāma-epos, literature and cult is given by Dr. Raghavan in his Introduction to the '*Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja.*'[44] The cult of Rāma in Tamilnadu as represented in art and thoughts is a gradual evolution, which has reached the present proportion in which people's aspiration to adore the perfect man, the God, is fulfilled.

List of places in Tamil Nadu where outstanding *Rāmāyaṇa* sculptures in stone are seen :

1. Kailāsanātha Temple, Kāñcīpuram :

   Vāli worshipping Liṅga and Rāvaṇa disturbing the Pūjā, Pallava—8th century A.D.

2. Ōlakkaṇeśvara temple, Mahābalipuram :

   Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa, Pallava—8th century A.D.

3. Mukteśvara and Mataṅgeśvara temples, Kāñcīpuram :

   Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa, Pallava—8th century A.D.

4. Vaikuṇṭha—perumal—temple, Kāñcī :

   Rāma—Pallava—8th century A.D.

5. Nāgeśvara temple, Kumbakonam.

   Complete Rāmāyaṇa—Miniature Panels—Early Chola Period, 9th century A.D.

6. Kadaimudi Mahādeva temple, Thiruchinampooṇḍi, Tanjore District :

   Rāmāyaṇa—Miniature panels, late Pallava, 9th century A.D.

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[44] *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja*, Dr. V. Raghavan.

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7. Śiva temple, Lalgudi :

   Rāmāyaṇa temple, late Pallava—9th century A.D.

8. Śiva temple—Thiruppurampiam :

   Rāmāyaṇa panels, Early Chola—9th century A.D.

9. Śiva temple, Pullamaṅgai :

   Rāmāyaṇa panels, Early Chola—10th century A.D.

10. Amalīśvaram—Pāchchūr, Trichi District :

    Rāmāyaṇa panels, Early Chola—10th century A.D., Miniature panels are also seen in a number of other temples.

11. Kampahareśvara temple, Kumbakonam :

    Rāmāyaṇa story, 13th century A.D.

12. Śiva temple, Dharmapurī :

    Rāmāyaṇa story, 13th century A.D.

13. Śrī Rāmasvāmi temple, Kumbakonam :

    A temple solely dedicated to Rāma as a teacher. Nāyak period—17th century A.D.

Bronzes :

1. Rāma Group from Viḍakkuppanaiyūr :

   Now in the Madras Museum, early Chola—10th century.

2. Rāma Group from Paruthiyūr, Tanjore district :

   Early Chola—10th century.

3. Rāma Group from Thiruchcherai, Tanjore District :

   Early Chola—10th century.

4. Rāma Group—Thiruppathūr, Rāmanad District :

   Pāṇḍya—early 10th century.

5. Rāma Group—Kāppalūr, North Arcot District :

   Chola—11th century A.D.

6. Rāma Group from Nathamāṅguḍi, Trichi District :

   Chola—11th century A.D. Also in a number of other temples.

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Paintings :

1. Eluttu Maṇḍapa, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, North Arcot District :
   Vijaynagar, 16th century.
2. Vishnu temple, Cheṅgam, North Arcot District :
   Nāyak School, 16th century.
3. Vishnu temple—Gingee, North Arcot District :
   Nāyak School, 17th century.
4. Vishnu temple, Athamaṅkoṭṭai, Dharmapuri District :
   Nāyak School, 16th century.
5. Vishnu temple, Thiruvellarai, Trichi District :
   Vijaynagar period, 16th century.
6. Ranganātha temple, Śrīrangam, Trichi District :
   Nāyak school, 17th century.
7. Vishnu temple, Śrīvilliputtūr, Ramnad District :
   Nāyak school, 17th century.
8. Śiva temple, Thirugokarṇam, Pudukkottai District :
   Tondaimān school, 18th century.
9. Palace, Tanjore—Rāma-paṭṭābhiṣeka,
   Maratta School, 19th century.
10. Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjore, Painted paper Manuscripts,
    Nāyak School, 17th century.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA IN ŚRĪ LAṄKĀ and LAṄKĀ OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA

By C. E. GODAKUMBURA

The Sinhalese poet Kumāradāsa's Mahākāvya, the *Jānakī-haraṇa* (*Jnk.*), is now published in full, and I believe is known to students of Sanskrit literature, particularly to those who interest themselves in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the ornate poetry and drama which followed, based on the same theme. Before dealing with any special features noticeable in this poem of Kumāradāsa, I want to place before you a folk story related to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, with important characters of the epic, Rāma, Sītā and Rāvaṇa, also Vālmīki, and further three sons of Sītā—(not twins as in the epic)—one a real son and two created miraculously for Sītā by the Sage. Here also are related the exploits of the monkey-chief Vālin, who is credited here with the exploits of Hanumant in the epic. To this story Umā or Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva, is also introduced. In this connection I shall attempt to deal chronologially with the spread of the Rāma-Sītā and Rāvaṇa story in the island, both from literary sources and folklore. Here we will have to take into account the geographical position of Laṅkā, from time to time as it was in the imagination of the Sinhalese during different periods, both by the literate and by the common folk.

Now let me first relate the folk version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in Śrī Laṅkā. I must add that this story is not wide-spread, and that it is even now known only to traditional performers of the occult rite or folk ceremony practised only in a few villages in the central districts of the island. Others who know it are only students of folklore and folk art who have read it in recent publications.

The Folk Version

This version of the story of Sītā is related during the performance of the 'Kohombā Yakkama' or the 'Kohombā Kankāriya' popularly called "Kankāriya", the most interesting

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and elaborate ritual dance drama extant among the Sinhalese, in order to recount the origin of the cult. The rite is said to have been first performed during the reign of Paṇḍuvāsadeva, the second Sinhalese King of Ceylon. (*C.* 5th century B.C.)

Paṇḍuvāsadeva, it is said, was tormented by frightful dreams believed to be due to his predecessor's, that is, King Vijaya's violation of a promise of marriage to the Yakṣa princess Kuveṇī. Magicians, charmers or medicine men could do nothing until finally, at the request of the gods, King Malaya came from India and performed the first Kohombā Yakkama ceremony.

During this ceremony several stories or legends are related some of which may have a historical basis, and others mere myth. Among them is the story of the birth and childhood of Prince Malaya. Malaya (Sinhalese : *mala* = a flower) was created out of a lotus flower and was brought up by Sītā in her exile with her own son, and another boy who had a similar miraculous birth. The dancers and drum-beaters who perform the rite know from memory the whole text of the ceremony, with all the anecdotes, in Sinhalese verse, together with detailed narratives in prose. Among them is the story of the three sons of Sītā. The following account of the story of Sītā is gathered from the text of the Kohombā Yakkana obtained from a dancer in the village of Koṭaligoḍa in Yaṭinuvara in the District of Kandy.

Viṣṇu (incarnate as Rāma) was under an inauspicious aspect of Saturn, the malefic planet, and in order to avert its evil effects, he left his queen, Sītā, and taking the guise of an elephant passed the seven unlucky years in the forest. Meanwhile, when there remained but one week to complete the period of exile, Rāvaṇa, the ten-headed Rākṣasa king, carried Sītā away in his aerial car to his capital in Laṅkā and attempted to seduce her. Sītā told him that she was under a vow of chastity for three months and added that at the end of that time she would allow him to fulfil his wishes.

At the end of the seven years Rāma returned home and not finding his wife began to roam the forest in search of her, where he met Vālin wandering around, lamenting the loss of his wife, who had eloped with the king of the apes. Vālin came to Viṣṇu and told him, "Friend, help me to get my wife back and

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I will accompany you to battle. Moreover, I shall go to Rāvaṇa, deceive him, and bring back your queen Sītā."

Viṣṇu agreed and shot the king of the apes with his arrow. Vālin recovered his wife and obtained three boons from Viṣṇu : ability to walk on the sea, protection from fire, and immunity against arrows. Vālin then entered Rāvaṇa's park, climbed the best of his mango trees, and ate the fruits thereof. The park-keeper tried in vain to capture the vicious animal, and in the end brought the matter to the notice of the king. The royal guards surrounded the monkey; amused at his antics, Sītā, too, was present there enjoying the fun in the company of Rāvaṇa, and she suggested that they wrap cloth round his tail and set it on fire. The guards dipped the monkey's tail in oil, wrapped rags round it, and set fire to them. Vālin jumped on the roof, setting fire to it, and setting the whole city ablaze. Then while confusion reigned in Rāvaṇa's court he seized Sītā and carried her back to Viṣṇu.

A short while after, Sītā conceived a child and at this time Viṣṇu have to attend the meeting of the assembly of the gods, leaving Sītā alone at home. Umā paid a visit to Sītā and inquiring about her life in Laṅkā, asked her to describe how Rāvaṇa looked like. To satisfy the curiosity of her friend Sītā made a sketch of Rāvaṇa's figure on the leaf of an ash-plantain. Hardly had Sītā completed her drawing when Viṣṇu came home, and seeing him come she threw her drawing under the bed. Viṣṇu sat on the bed, but by the puissance of Rāvaṇa the bed began to shake, and when Viṣṇu looked underneath to see what the matter was he discovered Sītā's drawing. Enraged at the sight of it, and suspecting Sītā to be in love with Rāvaṇa, Viṣṇu sent for his brother Saman (= Sanskrit : Sumana) and commanded him to kill Sītā, adding, "I want you to take this wicked woman into the forest and behead her." Saman led Sītā to Himālayas, left her near a hermitage, and returned with his sword wet with the blood of a wild animal which he had cut, and reported to his brother that his command had been carried out.

Sītā was weary and slept there for a long while. At last she woke, and wept being afraid of the lonely forest where she was left helpless. The sage Vālamiga (=Sanskrit-Vālmīki) who lived

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in the hermitage close by, went towards the direction of the cries and saw Sītā in that pitiable condition. The compassionate sage thought it his duty to help a pregnant women and therefore built her a hut of leaves near his own pond. Sītā lived in this hut subsisting on the fruits of the forest, and when her time of delivery came she gave birth to a son whom she showed to the hermit. The holy man gave his blessing to the little one and the mother and child continued to live there enjoying his protection. One day when the mother left the child in bed and went to the forest in search of fruits he fell off his bed and began to scream. The hermit drawn by the shrieks of the infant, went to the hut and discovered him on the ground. The sage could not touch him to put him back on the bed, for it did not befit his holy life. He therefore, plucked a lotus from the pond and threw it on to the bed where it turned into child. Ignorant of what had happened, Sītā came back, took up the child that was on the bed, and was feeding him when her own child cried from under the bed. Seeing her son there she was confused and ran to the ascetic, who told her what had happened and tried to console her, but it was all in vain. "I shall not believe you", said she, "unless you create for me another child." How will you feed a third child? asked the sage. "I shall feed two at my breasts and third I shall feed on my little finger", replied Sītā. Vālamiga went back with her and threw a blade of sacrificial grass on to the bed from which forthwith another child was created. When the three boys were only seven years old, they left their mother and went to the Malaya country where they built three royal parks and places and flourished under the names of Sandalindu, Mala, and Kistri (Kit-śri, Kisti).

Traces of the Rāmāyaṇa

Before commenting on the date of this folk version of the Rāma-Sītā story and the occult ceremony in the course of which it is related, we must search for traces of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic in the early literature and the art of Śrī Laṅkā.

The oldest chronicle of Ceylon, the *Dīpavaṁsa* (*C.* 4th century A.D.) has nothing about the Sinhalese Prince Vijaya's dealings with the Yakkhinī (Yakṣiṇī) girl Kuveṇī or Kuvaṇṇā, nor of his promise of making her his queen. The name Laṅkā is employed when speaking of the Siṁhala-dvīpa, but there is no

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mention of Laṅkāpura. The *Mahāvaṁsa* (*Mhv.*) (5th century A.D.) gives the incident of the encounter of Vijaya and his men with the Yakkhinis (Skt. Yakṣiṇī) and the prince lives with Kuvaṇṇā as man and wife. There are two cities of the Yakkhas, one Sirisavatthu (*Mhv.* Ch. 7 v. 32), and the other Laṅkāpura or Laṅkānagara (*ib.*, vv. 33, 62). In order to be crowned with a queen of equal birth Vijaya sends away the Yakṣa girl, and lets her down but there is not account of the result of curses suffered by Pāṇḍuvāsadeva, Vijaya's successor, on account of his predecessors's breach of promise to a woman to stand by her. The account of the frightful dreams of Paṇḍuvāsadeva appears only in the *Rājāvaliya*, a Sinhalese chronicle of about the fifteenth century, and in an occult text, the *Kuveniasna* "the Story of Kuveṇī" of the same period. The *Rājāvaliya* mentions Rāvaṇa, and further more, attempts to give him a date, about 2300 B.C. The chronicle also goes on to say that by the time of the Buddha, that is, the arrival of Vijaya in Śrī Laṅkā, in the sixth century B.C. there were no Piśācas (Rākṣasas) in the island. The *Rājāvaliya* also speaks of the rock Lak-gala and the city Sirisavatthu (Sirivatpura). The Lak-gala here may be the Laṅkāpura of the *Mhv.*, but there is also another Yakha settlement, Lok-gala or Lot-gala (*Rājāvaliya,* ed. Watuwatte Pemananda, 1926, pp. 17-22).

The name Laṅkā for the island of the present Śrī Laṅkā or the former Siṁhaladvīpa or Ceylon, is no evidence to place the home of Rāvaṇa in Śrī Laṅkā, and in this connection, reference may be made of T. Paramasiva Iyer's *Rāmāyaṇa and Laṅkā,* parts I & II, Bangalore, 1940; and H.D. Sankalia, *Rāmāyaṇa, Myth or Reality,* New Delhi, 1973. True, there was an ancient port which still bears the name Illankaturai situated South of Trincomalee, but this Ilankai is only the Tamil form of the word Laṅkā.

One may be tempted to take Laṅkāpura as the *Rājadhāni* or the capital of the Rākṣasa king Rāvaṇa. It is possible that the name may have been suggested to the author through the name of the Rākṣasa city in the epic, and in the language of the *Māhāvaṁsa* we clearly notice the influence of the Sanskrit epics. But it is only the name and nothing more. Laṅkāpura (Nagara) is a city of the Yakṣas and not the Rākṣasas.

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It has been pointed out in a thesis that the name of Rāvaṇa's brother Vibhīṣaṇa, who for a just cause befriended Rāma and became his ally, is connected with Śrī Laṅkā in the Mahāyāna magical text, the *Mahāmāyūri* as "Vibhīṣaṇas Tōmraparṇyām" (*Ananda Guruge, the Society of the Rāmāyaṇa,* Maharagana, 1960, p. 68). The text has been taken to be before the fourth century A.D. on the strength of a Chinese translation which is dated in that period. The position has, however, to be re-examined. Common material can exist in two texts, and names of gods can be interpolated. We can find examples in the *'Āṭānātiyasutta'* of the *Dīghanikāya.* We shall presently come to instances where the name of Vibhīṣaṇa occurs in the inscriptions and literature of Śrī Laṅkā. This is in and after the fourteenth century A.D.

The Epics

Allusions to the *Rāmāyaṇa* story, and figures of speech, usually similes with the names of the chief characters of the epic—Rāma, Sītā, and Rāvaṇa,—occur in the latter portion of the *Mahāvaṁsa*, namely, the *Cūlavaṁsa*, in the portions that were added to the chronicles in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. In the accounts of King Parākramabāhu I (A.D. 1153-1186) we meet with the following statements. This king heard the worldly stories such as those contained in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the (*Mahā*)-*bhārata*, while yet a boy (*Mhv.* ch. 64, vv. 43-44). Once when his ministers told king Parākramabāhu that they could not build a causeway or bridge across the Dāduru-oya (a river in the North Central Province of Ceylon), he replied to them : "The whole world still knows how King Rāma once built a causeway across the ocean, employing only monkeys" (*ib.* ch. 64, v. 20). Similarly, the king's soldiers who had crossed a certain river are likened to the monkeys who waded over the waters of the ocean in the Rāma-Rāvaṇa war (*ib.* ch. 75, v. 59). One of the king Parākramabāhu's queens, Rūpavatī, loved the King as Sītā did love Rāma; and she won the affection of the King, as Sītā earned the love of Rāma. Her praise is like the eulogies of poets on Sītā: "..... most beauteous of beautiful women, clever, virtuous, pur in action, highly famed..." (*ib.* ch. 73, vv. 137-143). During the reign of Parākramabāhu II (A.D. 1236-1270) Prince Vīrabāhu slew numbers of the enemy as Rāma did the Rākṣasas (*ib.*, ch. 83, v.

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46). The king who followed Parākramabāhu II, namely Vīrabāhu (1270-1272), "went forth with Vijayabāhu... surrounded the great army of Candrabhānu on all sides and fought a great battle, terrible as the combat of Rāma (with Rāvaṇa) (*ib.* ch. 88, v. 69). These are poetic and learned figures of speech and not folklore; and as to their sources we have to look for a recension of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; or it can be Kumāradāsa's *Jānakīharaṇa*, for which there was a *sanne*, that is, a word-for-word translation, which may be dated on the evidence of language in about the twelfth century. The *Raghuvaṁśa* had been studied by the Sinhalese. Rājaśekhara was known to the author of the *Sasadāvata-sanne* (12th century) and among quotations from his *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* in this commentary, there is also one from the *Bālarāmāyaṇa* (*Br.*) as comment on verse 117 (*Sasadāvata-sanne*, 1934, p. 37), and this agrees with *Br.*, Benares ed. v. 35.

Idle Talk

Papañcasūdanī, the Pali Commentary on 'the *Majjhima-nikāya* (of the fifth century A.D.), classes narratives such as the story of the Bhārata war and the tale of the abduction of Sītā as frivolous and useless talk : "Bhāratayuddha-Sītāharaṇādini-ratthākathā-purekkhāratā, tathārūpīkathākathanam ca." (*op. cit.*, P.T.S. ed. pt. 1, p. 201). This was re-echoed and elaborated upon by Sinhalese writers. The preacher monk, Dharmasena, a contemporary of the writer of the above cited portions of the *Cūlavaṁsa*, who was slightly earlier, in his book of Buddhist stories, the *Saddharma-ratnāvaliya* (Jayatilaka ed., p. 952), while speaking of the recital of the epics in the North Indian kingdoms and cities—a list of which he gives—says that the people of those countries paid gold, bullion and coins, and got the stories such as those of Rāma and Sītā, which are a hindrance to the attainment of heaven and Release, related to them. Dharmasena adds that they merely neglect the hearing of stories that are productive of good thoughts. This collection of Buddhist stories is meant to be read out to the masses, and the author's admonition and the condemnation of the stories of the Epic may be to prevent the common folk beginning to relish these tales in preference to Buddhist religious stories. It is after this period that we find the *Rāmāyaṇa* story beginning to be popular, and the worship of Viṣṇu, Utpalavarṇa and Rāma

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getting some prominence. King Parākramabāhu II was a loyal devotee of Utpalavarṇa, and other gods of Devinuvara and he had the statue of one of them conveyed to a new temple at Alutnuvara, closer to his capital at Dambadeniya, and near the home of his viceroy who advised him in such matters. We shall shortly see that this God was identified with Rāma before long.

Rāmāyaṇa and Sinhalese Literature

(i) *Vibhīṣaṇa*

We come to Vibhīṣaṇa again and also to Utpalavarṇa, the Lotus-coloured God. Their names are found in the rock inscription of King Bhuvanaikabāhu IV, dated Śaka 1268 (A.D. 1344). Here, as well in a copy of it we get Kihirali and Upulvan as one and the same God, and we need not go into details about this God; but it is of interest to us if Saman (Sumana) and Vibhīṣaṇa is the same, as then we can see that at one time, Vibhīṣaṇa was the God of Adam's Peak, a very important Buddhist shrine. Vibhīṣaṇa's alliance with Rāma is spoken of very favourably in some of the literary works of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.

Kelaniya (Kālaṇiya = Pali; Kalyāṇī) near Colombo has been and still is the seat of this tutelary God Vibhīṣaṇa, and he is eulogized in a number of Dūta or Sandeśa Kāvyas, messenger or message-poems, written in Sinhalese somewhat on the lines of the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa. (There is a *sanne*-translation of the *Meghadūta* contemporary with the *Jnk-sanne.*) Dondra or Devinuvara, as we have seen, was the seat of Utpalavarṇa. Now the name of this God is forgotten and Viṣṇu is worshipped there instead, and Rāma who was taken to Alutnuvara also has given place either to a local god or to Viṣṇu, whose *avatāra* Rāma was. According to tradition it was to Utpalavarṇa that the Buddha entrusted the care of Śrī Laṅkā when the Aryan (Siṁhala) Prince Vijaya and his men landed in Śrī Laṅkā, but now the belief is that it was Viṣṇu who was appointed as the protector of the Buddhist religion in the island. In the *Tisarasandeśaya* or the "Swan's Message", written in about the middle of the fourteenth century, the messenger bird starts from Devinuvara in the South, the southernmost point in the island, and goes to Gampola, the capital in the hill country, with the

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blessings of God Utpalavarṇa. On his way the bird is to stop at Kelaniya, and go to the temple of Vibhīṣaṇa. In this context when speaking of the local God it is said that he befriended the God of Dondra, Upulvandev-rada, in very early days, thus identifying Utpalavarṇa with Viṣṇu and Rāma (*op. cit.*, Jayatilaka's ed. 1935, vv. 100-101).

The messenger bird, the peacock of the *Mayūrasandeśa* written a short time after the former poem, on his way from Gampola to Devinuvara has also to halt at Kelaniya and pay his homage to Vibhīṣaṇa. He is also to pray to the God to bless and increase the power of the King of Gampola just as he obtained victory for Rāma, the son of King Daśaratha (*op. cit.*, ed. Amaramoli, 1934, v. 39).

The messenger bird of the *Haṁsasandeśaya* "the Goose-Message", on his way from the capital Jayavardhana-Koṭṭe, near Colombo to Keragala (Kāragala) in the interior of the Western Province also has to pass through Kelaniya, and he is enjoined to inform the God the purpose of his journey. Here the allusion to the *Rāmāyaṇa* is very definite and clear: "Rāma, who was in human guise, with his fearless voice which resembled the roar of the best of Kesarī lions, put to fright the countless hosts of Rākṣasas, and scattered them about. Then in the company of the gods, Vibhīṣaṇa was anointed as the sovereign Lord of Śrī Laṅkā. On kings who made offerings to him he bestowed wealth and gave them victory over their enemies. They were made prosperous and their fourfold armies were strengthened" (ed. Godakumbura, 1953, v. 113 with the reading *nirindunhaṭa* "to kings" in line 6).

The *Sāḷalihiṇi-sandeśaya*, the "Starling's Message", completed in A.D. 1450, is sent to God Vibhīṣaṇa at Kelaniya from the Capital of Kotte not far distant. Since Vibhīṣaṇa was himself the receiver of the prayer, there is a glowing praise of the God, touching his physical or bodily characteristics and also his valour, prowess and virtues. In this the poet has not forgotten that the God was by birth a Rākṣasa. He has a pair of tusks, that shine as two crescent moons, if there can be a pair of them, shining on either side of a row of evening clouds, namely, his red lips. The eulogy ends with : "He is the brother of Rāvaṇa who brought the three worlds under his sway, with full knowledge of the past, the present and the future, he chose

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to be the devoted ally of Lord Rāma. He is the gem-made light to illumine the noble family of Pulasti. (ed. Dharmārāma-vv. 77-93.)

The *Kokila-sandeśaya* the "Cuckoo's Message" presents Utpalavarṇa at Dondra, and Viṣṇu as different gods, and Vibhīṣaṇa reigns at Kelaniya (ed. P. S. Parera, 1906, vv. 22 ff, and v. 120).

(ii) *Kausalyā, Temple of Rāma*

In an eulogy of the *Kokila-sandeśaya,* the mother of King Parākramabāhu VI (A.D. 1410-1468) is compared to Kausalyā : "Ram-raduta dinitiya Kosalindu dū-radū mena," "like the daughter of the Kosala King, the mother of King Rāma" (*op. cit.*, v. 109).

Further in the same Sandeśa, God Rāma is eulogized as flourishing in Yāpāpaṭuna, the modern Jaffna, but this was a provincial seat of a prince who, though a Sinhalese, had a foreign origin, and many foreigners such as Tamils and Javanase were living there (*op. cit.*, v. 251). God Rāma is described thus: "In that city flourishes the Lord of the Gods, God Rāma, his body shining with a colour as if the lustre of the ocean got stuck there when with great effort the causeway was being built to bring over the hosts of fighters in days of old for the battle against the Ten-headed Rāvaṇa" (*op. cit.*, v. 252). Perhaps this later became a Viṣṇu shrine.

In the *Parevisandeśaya*, "the Dove's Message" of Śrī Rāhula of Toṭagamuva, we find an interesting position. The poem is one of Rāhula's early works, which may be dated between about 1435 and 1445. The poet's close acquaintance with the *Jānakīharaṇa* is clearly evident. In this Sandeśa, Rāhula takes the God of the Bow as the son of Utpalavarṇa, and he is likened to Rāma, who, armed with the Golden Bow, defeated Paraśu-Rāma (1925 edition v. 201). Later on we shall see that the God of the Golden Bow was Rāma, and it was God Rāma's statue which was taken from Dondra to Alutnuwara.

(iii) *Sītā*

Coming to other classes of poetry, we find Śrī Rāhula in his *Kāvyaśekharaya,* a court poem with a Jātaka story for its theme, comparing the beauty and virtues of Princess Lokanātha, the

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daughter of King Parākramabāhu VI (A.D. 1410-1468) to those qualities of Sītā (*op. cit.*, I, 15). At the same time, when the poet is in a preaching mood, he re-echoes the words of Dharmasena Thera, including also the (*Mahābhārata*) the *Rāmāyaṇa* as consisting of useless words, and their narrative to be of no use (*ib.*, IX, 25).

(iv) *Rāma-Sītā*

The *Girāsandeśaya*, "the Parrot's Message" states that in a certain Rest-Hall in the western coast, the bird will meet when he stops there on his journey, persons tarrying there, among them those who have accepted false beliefs, and some who appreciate poetry and drama, relating the stories of Rāma and Sītā (Dehigaspe-Polonnaruve ed. 1933, v. 107). It is also stated that in the Rest-Hall were travellers who had come from foreign countries and thus the people who related the tales from the two epics may have been foreign merchants and pilgrims.

(v) *Rāma, Rāvaṇa, Hanumant*

The well-known poem, the *Guttlilaya,* the poetical version of the *Guttila-jātaka,* belonging to about the second half of the fifteenth century, has the following apt simile to illustrate how the Bodhisattva attained to greater fame through the ingratitude of his pupil : "Just as King Rāma's fame spread still more on account of the wicked Ten-necked Rāvaṇa" (*op. cit.*, v. 331). The *Buduguṇālaṁkāraya* of a poet of Vīdāgama who was opposed to the worship of the gods, quotes the *Rāmāyaṇa* story for a different purpose. He says, "Look at the power of the gods! Rāma, a god, could not cross the sea over which a monkey had jumped!" (*op. cit.*, v. 180).

(vi) *God Rāma*

As we have seen God Utpalavarṇa of Devnuvara, was identified as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, and thereafter appears to have been taken as Rāma who was an *avatāra* or an incarnation of Viṣṇu, although the scholar Rāhula took him otherwise in his *Parevisandeśaya*. Thus we have similar lines about the seventeenth century, in connection with the building of the new

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shrine at Alutnuvara for a God from Devnuvara, where Rāma is spoken of as Rāma-deva-rāja, Rāma-dev-rada in Sinhalese : Rāma devurada Devundara sita Aluthnuvarata vadingamane..." When the Lord God Rāma was so gracious as to come to Alutnuvara from Devundara." (Bell, Kegalla Report, p. 125). Devundara is the common popular name for Dondra or Devnuvara.

About this time the acceptance of Rāma as a God caught the popular mind also at least to a certain extent. A folk poem of 101 quatrains of about the 17th or the eighteenth century, called the *Ran-dunu-paralaya* "the Inspiration or the Possession of the God of the Golden Bow" (printed 1925, Nevill 750) eulogizes the heroism and prowess of God Rāma, who is at the same time Utpalavarṇa and Viṣṇu. The important theme here is Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa. Rāma or Viṣṇu gets the Golden Bow from the Milky Ocean. Rāvaṇa also has his great bows. Both fight with bow and arrow. The work by its nature is a magical text, to be used at occult ceremonies. The Rāma cult seems to have spread to some extent among the common people. Stanzas from the *Randunuparalaya* are heard as fugitive verse, which show their popularity. *Randunumamgale* "Ode to the Golden Bow" (Nevill, 108), *Randunukavi* "Hymn of the Golden Bow," (*ib.*, 751) and *Randunu-upata* "Origin of the Golden Bow" (*ib.*, 752) also deal with the same subject.

Vaikuṇṭalaṁkāraya, "The Description of Vaikuṇṭha, Viṣṇu's Heaven", (printed 1926), a poem of 48 quatrains, speaks of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, particularly that as the God of Devundara (Devi-nuvara), who according to tradition, was born of a log of sandal-wood in Śaka era 712, that is, A.D. 800. Details of the year, month, day and time are also given (v. 6). This God is Viṣṇu, who vanquished the proud of Rāvaṇa (vv. 29-30). In the next verse (31), he is Rāmaguru of the dark blue or black colour. Hanumant is Rāma's son (v. 35, Rāmaputra v. 37). Saman (Lakṣmaṇa) has a golden bow in his right hand (v. 46), and Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) also has one (v. 47). This leads to a ceremony where the golden bows are kept on an altar with flower arrows (v. 48).

There are some ballads dealing with the story of Rāvaṇa and these may be about four centuries old. Of these *Rāvaṇa-katāva*, "Story of Rāvaṇa" (Nevill 177) shows only a slight

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variation. It says that Rāvaṇa ruled over twenty-five palaces and four hundred bazaars in Laṅkā. As it is the habit with later Sinhalese writers, Rāma is spoken of as Viṣṇu in *Rāvaṇahaṭana* "the War of Rāvaṇa" (Nevill 689); but the *Rāvaṇa-puvata* "The History of Rāvaṇa" (Nevill 690) is of some special interest. Here the story commences with an account of Viṣṇu going to bathe at the pond in his park, and finding the purple lilies plucked, and the water turbid. Determined to sift the outrage, he concealed himself, and watched the pond. Seven goddess came to bathe there, leaving their celestial clothes on the bank. Unperceived by them Viṣṇu stole one cloth, and when upon seeing him six of the fair nymphs flew away, one whose cloth he had secured was left behind. This goddess was Sītā, and Viṣṇu took her away with him, and made her his wife.

(vii) *Sītā as Lakṣmī*

In the court of Kandy, at least one poet took Rāma as Viṣṇu and Sītā as Kamalā (or Lakṣmī *i.e.*, Śrī Devī) the consort of Viṣṇu. One of the courtiers, a minister by the name of Gaskon had an intrigue with the Queen and the enraged King condemned the man to death. On his way to meet the executioners, the unfortunate minister is reported to have sung a verse which has been translated literally thus : "Since Rāvaṇa in days of yore offered for Lakṣmī (Sītā) his ten heads, upon the mere gratification of his eye-sight without enjoying connubial happiness; what signifies if my only head fall for thy sake, whose ambrosial love I have enjoyed" (James D'Alwis, The *Sidath Sangarawa,* Introduction, 1852, p. ccxv), and its versified English translation is also given here :

"Laṅkā's giant king enthrall'd, only by beauty's sight
Laid down his twice five heads, uncropp'd the flower of Love's delight.
Then why should I, a happier swain, who with the Gods above,
Have revelled at the banquet rare of thy ambroisal love,
Repine with my one head to atone for my bold adventure,
To gain what sweetens human lives as long as they endure."
(*Ibid.*, p. ccxiv)

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This attempt at English verse has been added as it brings out the spirit of the original which has been inspired by the lovely story of Sītā and Rāvaṇa. At this stage at least to some Rāvaṇa has become the hero.

(viii) *Rāvaṇa and Rāma*

In the *Iṁgirisi-haṭana* "the Ballad of the English war", a poem describing a battle between the Sinhalese and the English (British) fought near Kandy in 1803, a court poet compares the Sinhalese leader and the British General to Rāma and Rāvaṇa (*op. cit.,* v. 176).

We can multiply examples, but what has been brought out will be sufficient to demonstrate that both the writer of ornate literary poetry (*kāvya*) as well as the folk poet, took characters from the *Rāmāyaṇa* stories, and incidents out of them, for their compositions.

The last king of Kandy (A.D. 1798-1875), who was Nayakkar, however, was a devotee of God Rāma and there was a temple of Rāma at Hanguranketa, about twenty miles off Kandy, a retiring place of safety for the Kandy court. A Pali poem in honour of Rāma the *Rāma-sandasa* is mentioned. (Malalasekera, *Pali Literature of Ceylon,* Colombo, 1958, pp. 288-289), and Somadasa, K.D., *Mss. Catalogue* (in Sinhalese) Nos. 235, 761, 817.

Folk-lore

There is an abundance of folklore in Ceylon connected with the story of Rāma and Sītā. Some of these explain place-names; some point to special geographical features, others the lay of the land, the position of hills, nooks and bends in rivers, the colour of the soil and various curiosities. All this is folk-lore and nothing archaeologically provable or tested historically.

Here is one of these stories. Almost on the historical Galle Harbour in the South-west of Śrī Laṅkā island, there is a beautiful promontory named by modern educational missionaries in the Latin idiom "Bona Vista", Good View. All kinds of herbs, every one of them known to any system of indigenous medicine, are said to grow there and are to be found on this

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hill. I have heard that the older local people go to hill, when they are in need of a special herb to prepare a rare herbal decoction or render some medicinal treatment and they will search for the herb here. This is how it came about. The hill goes back, according to tradition, to the time of the Rāma-Rāvaṇa war; although as we shall see Śrī Laṅkā was not the battle-field in the mind of the creators of this story.

Those who have read the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Jānakīharaṇa* know the incident when Lakṣmaṇa lay senseless, believed by all friend and foe, to be dead, as the result of wounds he received from the weapons of Rākṣasas. Then Suṣeṇa, the physician of the monkeys, said that the life of the prince could be saved if he could have a certain herb which grew on the Himalayan peaks. To be sure of obtaining this 'life-bestowing' herb with all possible speed, Hanumant, the son of the Wind God, was sent to fetch it. As the good monkey-chief started off in haste, he had no time to learn exactly the name of the herb, but he remembered the name of the rock and its position; so he tore it off completely and carried it with all trees, creepers and everything alive or dead to be with Suṣeṇa and Lakṣmaṇa as soon he could and proceeded south faster than the wind itself.

The Galle Sinhalese folk add that as Hanumant was proceeding to be with the patient, carrying the rock, his eye caught the herb and he recalled its name. Now the monkey did not want to be burdened by the rock any more, and having torn off what he wanted of the herb, he threw the rock down by the sea, perhaps as he did not want to hurt any living being on land. It is this portion of the Himalayas, which now bears the name of Rūmassala, the meaning of which is explained in different ways, giving various etymoligies. The missionary school built here is called Bona Vista, and modernized people use that name. Seeing that Hanumant was coming from the Himayalas in the North and when he passed over Śrī Laṅkā, he would have been going southwards; and thus it is interesting to note that those local folk, among whom this story of the origin of Rūmassala originated, also would have taken Laṅkā to be to the south of Siṁhala just as the classical Sanskrit poets and dramatists, such as Murārī and Rājaśekhara did. Or was it simple coincidence? (Godakumbura, *Sāhityaya*, September, 1975.)

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Place-Names

Folklore relating to Rāvaṇa of Laṅkā and Sītā in captivity in his city has provided the occasion in Śrī Laṅkā for the creation of place-names, or to the greater extent, for attributing fanciful etymologies to existing ones. Thus to the South-East of the coast of Śrī Laṅkā, about six nautical miles off the shore, are two rock-cliff formed islets, and they are known to the outside world, as the Great and Little Bases. They are in Sinhalese the Maha-Rāvaṇa-koṭuva (or-koṭṭe) and the Kuḍā-Rāvaṇa-koṭuva (or-koṭṭe). It is not known how old these names are, but may be taken as later than the other *Rājāvaliya* chronicle texts. According to the popular meaning the names signify the Large Fortress of Rāvaṇa and the Small Fortress of Rāvaṇa. So also we have near Badulla in the hill country a high fall in a stream called Rāvaṇa-alla, the Rāvaṇa-falls, and they are said to be waters under which the Rākṣasas king had his bath.

The Sinhalese speakers who have not studied Sanskrit pronounce Rāvaṇa as *Rāvaṇā*. It is the form in which the name is met with in the manuscripts, and most printed texts, of the *Rājāvaliya* chronicles, and other related contemporary texts, so that the word-endings with the masculine singular 'a'-ending, are common to the nominative and accusative cases. The derived Sinhalese or older Eḷu form from Rāvaṇa is Ravuḷu, from which we get the nominative and accusative singular, Ravaḷā (This form belongs only to the old literary language and in modern parlance *ravulā* is a long-bearded man). In the short treatise on Sinhalese grammar, the *Sidatsaṅgarā* of the fourteenth century—a composition possibly of the same author as of the *Mayūrasandeśa* cited earlier, in its fourth chapter dealing with syntactical use of cases, for the example of an accusative ending in *a* we get : Ravuḷa māri Rāma-raja, King Rāma killed Rāvaṇa. We do not know whether the sentence was the author's creation, or whether he cited it from an earlier grammatical text or from older literature.

Now let us turn back to names Rāvaṇa-koṭṭe (-koṭuva) and Rāvaṇa-ālla. The Sinhalese word *rāvaṇa* does as a common noun also mean a kind of mollusc-shell, found in water, used for rubbing earthern-ware pots and other kitchen utensils for

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cleaning and washing. The place concerned, the rocks and the falls are where such shells can be found. These may have given them the names, or some other derivations have to be looked for. We then come to two other names of villages near Kandy, Uḍu-rāvana and Yaṭi-rāvana. Notwithstanding the fact that Rāvaṇa was not associated with Kandy, and Kandy is not taken to be an ancient royal seat, yet the recent popular etymology is that they are parks of Rāvaṇa, where another component *vana* has to be supplied to make it Rāvaṇa-vana. One may reasonably think that, considering how syllables waste away and syncope takes place with place-names, Uḍurāvana and Yaṭi-ravana, are the upper and lower royal forests or parks (*rāja-vana*). The cerebral *ṇ* in the modern spelling is the result of the false etymology.

There are place-names, now pronounced and also written with the first member of the compound Sītā, such as Sītā-vaka, a royal seat in the later fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, near the modern town of Avissawella. The late traditions are that Sītā in her exile bathed at the bend of the river (*vaka*) which is a tributary of the Kelaniganga. There is also Sītā-eliya near the hill health-resort of Nuvara-eliya. Also in the hill country are Sītā-gaṅgula and Sītā-alla. Sītā-gaṅgula is a broad pond-like spot in a stream, and Sītā-alla is a fall in a stream both near Nuvara-eliya. These are also said to be bathing spots of Sītā. Sītā-eliya is an open space, a *patana* land near Nuvara-eliya, and here the ground being black due to strata of patana grass rotting yearly, is pointed out as the result of the burning by Hanumant. It is clear that in these cases the first member of the compound was *sīta*, meaning cool or cold, as was later associated with Sītā. Except the name Sītā-vaka, the rest are of modern modification, and the result can also be due to English spelling where the length of vowels are not marked. Early English writers in Ceylon were much enamoured with the idea that Ceylon was the home of Rāvaṇa.

It must also be pointed out here that there is no place-name with Rāma used as the member of a compound. One may explain that it was due to his not being long in Laṅkā. But what of Vibhīṣaṇa? The association of places with Rāvaṇa and Sītā,

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are very late, and this is after the Sinhalese accepted Rāvaṇa as an ancient giant king of their island.

Art

So much for literature and folk-lore. There is no evidence even in art to show that either the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic was popular in Śrī Laṅkā in ancient time or there was any worship of Rāma in his own right separately or as Viṣṇu who had appeared on earth as Rāma. True that some Lakṣmī plaques have been found. These could have been brought in by merchants, both foreign and Sinhalese. They could also have been minted in imitation of such plaques as were accepted by dealers in goods, just as Roman coins were minted locally. So far as we know, the earliest Gaja-Lakṣmī figure found in Śrī Laṅkā is on a side of the Galpota-inscription of Niśśaṅkamalla (A.D. 1187-1196), a king who had foreign associations, with the Kāliṅgas of South-East Asia. There is also a Gaja-Lakṣmī sculpture at Yāpahu which was the capital in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. These sculptures are after the Cholian occupation of the northern portion of Śrī Laṅkā, including Polonnaruwa.

Classical Indian Writers

Indian writers, at least those between the eighth and the twelfth centuries, have distinguished between Laṅkā and Siṁhala. Two authors of two dramas on the *Rāmāyaṇa*-theme are very clear and definite in showing this distinction. In his account of the homeward journey of Rāma and his party from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā, Murāri in his *Anargharāghava* (ninth century A.D.) brings them over the Siṁhala-dvīpa only some time after they had left Laṅkā. Murāri has also that the Rohaṇa mountains are in the Siṁhala-dvīpa, and this is correct. More precise are the accounts of Rājaśekhara in two of his works (9th-10th centuries). In his drama, the *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, Rājaśekhara makes Rāvaṇa describe the location of Laṅkā to be to the south of Siṁhala. The lords of Laṅkā and Siṁhala are separately mentioned. Not only the Rohaṇa mountains, but the city of Anurādhāpura also is in the Siṁhala country. Further, at the contest of the bending of God Śiva's bow, Rāvaṇa speaks of the Siṁhala King as a person other than himself. During the

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